

THE FRIENDS OF
ENGLAND

THE HON. GEORGE PEEL





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THE FRIENDS OF ENGLAND



THE
FRIENDS OF ENGLAND

BY THE HON. GEORGE PEEL

AUTHOR OF "THE ENEMIES OF ENGLAND"

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DEDICATED
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HIS MAJESTY THE KING



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“I SHALL not enlarge upon the military exploits by which our various possessions were acquired, or upon the energy with which we or our fathers stemmed the tide of war; for the tale would be long, and is familiar to all of us. But I shall venture to point out by what principle of policy we have risen to power, and how, by the co-operation of public and private energy, our empire has become so great. . . . For we have planted eternal memorials of our Enmity and of our Friendship throughout the world.”

PERICLES, “Funeral Speech over the Athenians fallen in War” (Thucydides).



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THE FRIENDS OF ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE CAUSE OF THE EMPIRE

"THE ENEMIES OF ENGLAND," published in 1902, was an inquiry into the policy of England in Europe. The argument was that, during the last eight centuries, a series of powers had aspired to secure dominion over the continent, but that, since the success of any would involve our downfall, we had withstood the project of each in turn. The Papacy, Spain, and France were named as the opponents thus confronted by us in the past; and Russia and Germany as those whose antagonism we must anticipate in the future.

The present volume is an inquiry, on similar lines, into our policy in the world outside Europe. To begin with, the argument is that, on the gradual opening up of the continents of Asia, America, Australia, and Africa, the foremost powers of Europe began to appropriate those regions in such a manner that our old world, so far from being eclipsed by the new, reproduced itself over much of that immense area, and became gradually reincarnate on a vastly wider scale. This evidently constituted a change of the gravest importance for ourselves. Our statesmen

perceived that the European powers striving to become dominant in those new continents might eventually become dominant in Europe, thanks to the fresh resources thus acquired; and, if so, then destructive of our security. Hence our old domestic European danger now rose before us in a more threatening shape than before. We who were adjusting the balance of Europe must now adjust the balance of mankind, or perish; and, in preserving our own existence, must defend the liberty, not of a continent, but of a world.

In face of this danger, which has confronted us for three centuries, we have been obliged to adopt a forward and constructive policy in the outer world. In plain terms, in order to prevent its absorption by our European opponents, we have established the British empire, which may be defined as an organization raised by us during that period against the forward march of our European rivals.

This statement of the cause and character of the empire is, no doubt, opposed to the views of high authorities, and may legitimately be challenged as being at variance with the opinion generally entertained in this country. For example, the leading exponent of the accepted school of thought, the eminent author of "The Expansion of England," held that "we have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind."* Nor was this a mere casual expression upon his part. He observed also that, after we had lost our American colonies, "a second empire grew up almost in our own despite,"† as if this was actually in opposition to our policy.

* Sir John Seeley, "The Expansion of England," p. 8, edition of 1883.

† *Ibid.*, p. 14.

To him, again, it seemed that "our acquisition of India was made blindly,"* and was no better than a "romantic adventure" of heroic but unthinking men.

Our leading statesmen say the same. Mr. Chamberlain, speaking in 1905, has expressed the view that "we have never had a colonial policy; but, somehow or other, we have been allowed to blunder into the best parts of the world."†

These expressions of representative men indicate that our thinkers at home, without reference to party, believe that, in the construction of the empire, there was no design attributable to our statesmen, that it has been acquired on no particular principle, and that the irregularity of its outline and the broken sequence of its history correspond to the blindness of those who built it. As for the idea that our people have pursued the policy of empire for three centuries as a definite end of statesmanship, they would reject it as a signal error. Nevertheless, such was the case.

In direct opposition to the English account of the matter, stands the general body of opinion on the continent of Europe. Continental thinkers, so far from regarding our empire as the result of chance, esteem it to be the fruit of the most considered and calculating policy. Many persist in crediting us with the most resolute and unscrupulous determination to annex any portion of the globe upon which we can lay our hands. Thus, one of the most recent and most learned students of our policy, the head of the school of political science in Paris, points to our "insatiate avarice," and stigmatizes our statesmen as

* Sir John Seeley, "The Expansion of England," p. 179.

† Speech at Liverpool, *Times*, January 13, 1905.

all alike in rapacious ambition.* We simply trample on other races in our haste to be rich, and greed is the animating principle of our machinations.

Which of these accounts is correct? The answer is, neither. Our statesmen have been neither so inconsequent and thoughtless as the former would teach us, nor so Machiavellian as the latter represents. The real truth is, on the contrary, that for several centuries we have been confronted with a serious danger, to meet which our statesmen have striven to construct an empire on a reasonable and legitimate plan. Some of them, no doubt, have been obtuse, and others have been sinister. But, on the whole, they have neither been so blind nor so malignant as their critics of the two classes respectively suppose. Endowed with no more foresight or insight than is to be found among the ordinary rulers of men, they have seen a peril and have provided against it.

For instance, a retrospect of three centuries carries us back to 1604. In that year Robert Cecil, who at that date occupied a post corresponding to the position of Prime Minister, spoke "with heat" to the Spanish ambassador. He said that England could not possibly allow the Indies, east and west, to be closed against her by the power of Spain, and he added that at no price would he allow his countrymen to be excluded from the new world.†

The view of Cecil was also that of his contemporary, Bacon. To the mind of the latter "nothing is more manifest than that this nation of Spain runs

* Emile Boutmy, "Psychologie Politique du Peuple Anglais," 1901, pp. 117, 416-17.

† Siri, "Memorie Recondite," I. p. 278; "contraponeva Cecilio con calore."

a race of empire, when all other states of Christendom stand in effect at a stay ;” * and, again, “Spain hath an ambition to the whole empire of Christendom.” † Accordingly, to counteract and defeat this danger, it was to be hoped that “the King (James I.) will put a hook in the nostrils of Spain and lay a foundation of greatness to his children in those west parts.” ‡ In fact, a British empire was necessary to bar the progress of the colossus of Spain.

The argument of the present volume is that such a resolution as this of Cecil and Bacon, operating now against Spain, now against France, now against Russia, now against Germany, according as each power proved for the time being the most threatening, has produced that series of annexations termed the British empire. In other words, that empire is the fruit of a long, deliberate, persistent, and conscious effort upon the part of our statesmen to avert the predominance of any European power. If this be so, then the policy of England, whether in the old world of Europe or in the continents without, stands explained as one coherent and consistent plan. Her maintenance of the balance of power in Europe and her construction of an empire in the outer continents have been two aspects of the same design.

To pursue, however, the illustration first given, the English Government, in accordance with the principle enunciated by Cecil, formally annexed the whole of the North American shore in 1606, extending

* Works, vol. xiv., p. 479. Spedding's edition.

† Additional MSS. 4263, No. 102 (a); Harleian MSS. 6353, f. 72 b. (H), “A Short View to be taken of Great Britain and Spain.”

‡ “Gibson Papers,” vol. viii. f. 192. Docketed by Bacon, “Conf. B., Jan. 2, 1623.”

over eleven degrees of latitude.* At the same time they placed this immense region under a species of Colonial Office in embryo, termed the Royal Council of Virginia. Spain was intensely indignant. The documents of that date show that a "ceaseless diplomatic war was carried on by Spain against the interests of the colony."† Our government, on the other hand, issued instructions to the Royal Council of Virginia "to give directions for the good government of the people to be placed in those parts." All this was fourteen years before the sailing of the *Mayflower*. Thus the organization of the empire in America, so far from being an "accident" or due to "absence of mind," was undertaken with the utmost deliberation by our statesmen.

If further proof were needed, a state paper of that time informs us of the inner motive animating our government. Virginia, it says, "being inhabited by His Majesty's subjects will put such a bit into our ancient enemy's (Spain's) mouth as will curb his haughtiness of monarchy."‡ Accordingly, it was clearly recognized three centuries ago that the overshadowing power of Spain furnished a reason for us to construct the beginnings of an empire. Virginia, as the American shore was then called, was to be a bit in the mouth of Spain, just as, three centuries later, the descendant of Cecil annexed, or leased, Wei-hai-Wei in China to be a bit in the mouth of Russia.

* "Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, etc., of the United States," part ii. pp. 1888-1893. Charter of James I. to Sir W. Raleigh; Washington, 1877.

† Cf. H. E. Egerton, "A Short History of British Colonial Policy," p. 35.

‡ The despatch of Sir Thomas Dale to Sir Ralph Winwood; in Record Office; dated June 3, 1616.

Pursuant, then, to the argument of this book, the statement that the empire was acquired "in a fit of absence of mind" is precisely the reverse of what really happened. When the new world was revealed, our energetic and enterprising people began to go abroad, some for gold or spices, some in the hope of adventure, and some on the loftier quest of spiritual freedom. Our government at that epoch had two courses open to it. First, it might neglect and ignore this movement, and might consign our people to the chances of fortune and the hostility of our European enemies; or else it might organize them into one imperial system. In view of the dangers from without, it deliberately chose the latter course, with the acquiescence of our emigrants themselves, who recognized that, without such organization at the beginning, they could not hope to prevail against the hostile international forces confronting them. As the foremost authority on the original documents of that age has said:

"The idea that the dangerous and increasing power of Spain in America should be checked, had been growing in England ever since the arrival there, in 1565, of the Huguenots who escaped massacre by the Spaniards in Florida. It had produced several enterprises of a private character; but, in 1605, it took a national turn, and very many Englishmen were determined to consummate the idea of securing for their country and for their religion 'a lot or portion of the new world' regardless of the claims of Spain." *

To offer another illustration of the same law, those who consider that our empire arose by chance

* Alexander Brown, "Genesis of the United States," Preface, pp. xiv.-xv.

or, on the other hand, from commercial rapacity, should be confronted with the declarations of Cromwell made half a century later, to whom the necessity of empire was as clear as to the Cecil of the time of Elizabeth, or to the Cecil of the time of Victoria. "The Spaniards," he says, "would appropriate to themselves the signory of the whole world." Hence his expedition to the West Indies against those who, "without any just cause or provocation at all, cease not to kill and slaughter, nay, sometimes in cold blood to murder the people of this nation, spoiling their goods and estates, destroying their colonies and plantations."* Cromwell, like Cecil, founded our imperial policy upon the ground of necessity. He acted because it was vital to resist "the Spaniard's pretensions to the sole sovereignty of all those parts of the world."†

Enough has been said to show that it was not reserved for the statesmen of our day to comprehend the necessity of empire. Of course, it is not meant that Cecil or Cromwell foresaw and planned the structure of any such empire as has arisen since. Such an hypothesis would be absurd. But the contention is that, just as we in our day annexed East Africa against Germany and West Africa against France, even so, with equal deliberation and for a similar motive, did Cecil's contemporaries annex America, and Cromwell also a portion of the West Indies, against the power of Spain. It is by this series of annexations, made on this principle of self-defence, that the empire has reached its present extent.

* Manifesto, dated October 26, 1655.

† Cf. Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1660," vol. iii. p. 403.

Leaving the proof of this proposition to be established in future chapters, it is time to proceed to the second stage of the argument.

As soon as our government, early in the seventeenth century, had decided to organize our emigrants into communities politically united to ourselves, a novel issue arose. Admittedly, it was desirable to secure them to us, for that was the very object of their establishment. But how was it possible to retain their allegiance and co-operation? There were two policies open. We might grant them free institutions, and thus endow them with all the benefits of our own civilization. This was done. "All the English colonies established in America and the West India islands, during the seventeenth, and the beginning of the eighteenth century, received a representative constitution, imitated, for the most part, from that of the mother-country."* The other policy available was to keep a strict control over their fortunes and to treat them rather as subordinates than as fellow-citizens. This, though manifestly inconsistent with the first policy, was enacted also. For instance, great restrictions were placed upon their commerce, so that, as Adam Smith pointed out, liberty and subordination seemed to combine in their case. "In every thing," he said, "except their foreign trade, the liberty of the English colonists to manage their own affairs in their own way is complete." †

In spite, however, of this twofold measure, they

* Sir George Lewis, "The Government of Dependencies," edition of 1891, p. 154.

† Adam Smith, "The Wealth of Nations," Book IV. chap. vii. p. 262, edition of 1861.

revolted, and we forfeited their partnership in the empire. Indeed, it was surprising that they remained with us so long. As early as 1671 the disruption of the empire seemed already in view. Evelyn noted in his diary of that date that, at a meeting of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations,

“what we most insisted on was to know the condition of New England; which appearing to be very independent as to their regard to old England or His Majesty, rich and strong as they now were, there were great debates in what style to write to them, for the condition of that colony was such that they were able to contest with all other Plantations about them, and there was fear of their breaking from all dependence on this nation.”*

This passage is exceedingly instructive as to the cause maintaining the empire. Spain was now definitely in decline and no longer threatened; France had not yet risen very far above the horizon; and therefore at this date the real reason for a common empire had receded into the background. Our colonists, being now for the time “able to contest with all other Plantations about them,” were already tending towards independence. France, however, was soon to make great progress, and was to threaten our colonies from that time till her cession of Canada in 1763. As soon as the Americans were freed from the fear of France, it was recognized, as will be shown later, that their emancipation from us would follow in due course.

Here, then, becomes visible an illustration of the second proposition maintained in this book. The first was that European pressure from without is the

* John Evelyn, “Memoirs,” vol. i. pp. 438-9, edition of 1819.

cause of the formation of the empire; the second is that European pressure from without is the main cause of its maintenance. When that pressure increases, the empire tends to be consolidated; when it diminishes, the empire correspondingly tends to dissolve. Let it be added, however, that, though this sense of common danger forms the empire's base, in our own day a true and mutual affection has flowered from this stern and stubborn root.

The third stage of the argument deals with the period subsequent to the loss of America. According to Sir John Seeley, the course of events was that "a second empire grew up almost in our own despite"; or, according to our continental critics, it has been due to our thirst for wealth. It will be possible to bring the strongest proof of the precise contrary of both propositions. At any rate, the ensuing pages attempt to show that, just as our original American empire was deliberately organized as a political measure of self-preservation against Europe, so our new empire was similarly organized.

On the revolt of our American colonies our statesmen set themselves to reconstruct the empire. To possess an empire outside the narrow seas was the more urgent in that our American friends were now our enemies, and that France in 1778 had renewed her progress. True, we held India, but our position *vis-à-vis* of France was even yet doubtful;* and the West Indies, but they were in jeopardy; and Canada, but its population consisted mainly of conquered Frenchmen. Such were the poor and doubtful relics of dominion. To mention four of the most momentous

* Cf. "Bombay State Papers," Mahratta Series, pp. 291 and 296, for 1778.

steps taken by us in the period immediately subsequent, we reorganized Canada so as to secure its allegiance, we consolidated India, we annexed Cape Colony, and we hoisted our flag in Australia. These four great portions of the empire, to mention no others, were either conquered from, or annexed in order to anticipate, France. It was done deliberately by our government, and certainly not "in our own despite." Nor were these appropriations of territory associated with a commercial purpose. Thus, not to dwell at this point upon details, the third stage of the argument shows that, from the loss of America to our own day, a new empire has been acquired and organized for precisely the same motive and on the same principle as the first.

So much for the past. As regards the present, it will be pointed out, fourthly, that the annexations made for the purpose of establishing this second empire have been so vast that it now consists, excluding the United Kingdom, of 340,000,000 persons of the dark races, and about 11,000,000 only of our own Anglo-Saxon stock. How to retain all these as friends within a common empire is a problem which presents itself to us under two aspects; the first of which has regard to the 11,000,000 of our own people resident mainly in Cape Colony, Canada, and Australia.

Our first plan, up to 1840, was to keep a tight hand over the latter, and to deny them genuinely free institutions. But from 1840 onwards they have all received self-government, after the style of the old revolted American colonies. At about the same time the cause, which, according to the argument of this book, maintains the empire, had begun to weaken and

abate, so that it seemed more than probable that they would utilize their new-found freedom to quit us; for Europe, after 1815, lay exhausted, or at any rate comparatively quiescent, for many years. Just as the temporary weakness of our European opponents in the middle of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had produced a corresponding relaxation or disruption of the bonds of empire, so in the middle of the nineteenth century men at home and abroad asked what was the use of empire in the expected reign of universal peace. It will be shown that, from about 1870 up to our own day, this dream of universal peace has been rudely shattered, that the antagonistic European forces arrayed against us have been immensely strengthened, and that by consequence, on the principle maintained throughout this volume, the empire, so far at least as the self-governing colonies are concerned, has been consolidated and reorganized. Such is the almost scientific precision with which, in century after century, the bonds of empire are slackened or confirmed. The beliefs of the age of Cobden and the opposite beliefs of the present age of imperialism have been alike the product of the ebb and flow of the hostile energies of Europe. Soon after 1870, the realization of the power of modern armies and armaments made our people desirous of consolidating the imperial ties. Possessed of Anglo-Saxon civilization, we have begun to take steps to preserve it.

It remains to deal with the question of the loyalty, or otherwise, of the enormous masses of our dark fellow-subjects. Strangely enough, it exists; and, still more curiously, it rests on as substantial a basis as the loyalty of Canada, South Africa, or

Australia. It is, too, of the same kind; and as time goes on, and as these humbler people rise in the scale, we shall see more clearly than at present that it is the pressure of our European rivals upon them and the comparison which they will draw between our rule and that of others which, sentiment apart, bind them to the empire.

These races, prior to our assumption of sovereignty, were, broadly speaking, politically decadent. Confusion and misery reigned. We annexed them, not, it is to be feared, out of philanthropy, but in order to anticipate the encroachments of our European rivals. For instance, Burma was occupied, not out of love for King Theebaw, but to forestall France. The Soudan was conquered to secure the headwaters of the Nile, and therefore Egypt, and therefore India, on the same account. We acted thus because we felt it necessary to have friends, and not enemies, in those regions. But if the inhabitants were to be well disposed to us we must do what was necessary to that end. So we have been irresistibly inspired to bestow every good gift of government upon them. Our need has been the preceptor of our duty.

This beneficent activity of ours in thus improving and elevating the native races which have fallen into our hands appears, in one aspect, nothing short of suicidal. In India or in Egypt, for example, it seems that the outcome of all our efforts to "fit them for self-government" is that eventually they will ask to be free. Thus the same eternal dilemma of the empire presents itself as much in these cases as in the cases of Australia or Canada. Our purpose being to establish friendly communities, we seem to

be under the unfortunate necessity of earning their goodwill by the bestowal of all that will eventually fit them for complete emancipation from ourselves.

But in reality it is in this apparent danger that the safety and unity of the empire is rooted after all. A native Indian or Egyptian has possibly no love for us. But, on the other hand, he has received, or has begun to receive, civilization at our hands, and feels indisposed to part with it. It would be certain that, in the case of our retirement, our civilization would be wrecked, and that other Europeans would possess themselves of India and Egypt, so that the natives would be not a whit happier or freer than before. It is thus perhaps arguable that the Indian or Egyptian has in a certain sense a larger stake in the empire than the Australian or Canadian, in proportion as he has more to lose by its disruption. For, if the empire were to be dissolved, Canada might conceivably survive that disaster, but India never.

Fifthly, having surveyed the past and the present, we should endeavour to read the future in the light and by the guidance of these principles. Thus applied, they would seem to give warning of two dangers that lie before the British empire. The first may be summarized in the phrase, the United States. The second may be summarized incorrectly but conveniently as the Yellow Peril. The conclusion of this volume is that neither of these dangers should prevail against us. They are dangers, nevertheless.

The danger from the United States applies chiefly to our self-governing colonies. An Australian or a Canadian may say: "My reason for remaining within the British empire is my devotion to, and faith in, my

Anglo-Saxon civilization, which would be imperilled, if I quitted the empire, by the hostile forces of Europe. But if I passed under the ægis of the United States, this precious possession, which I prize above all others, would be not only not forfeited, but would be mine more securely than ever. For the United States is not only Anglo-Saxon, but may be more powerful than England. In her company I should be as free, and more safe, than now."

The danger from the Yellow Peril applies more to our peoples of alien race and blood. An Indian or an African may say: "Hitherto I have been loyal to the empire because before it came I had no civilization; it has brought the germs of one better than I have ever known before. But I am now possessed of a new ideal. I think that I can have my own civilization, after the example of Japan. I prefer my own civilization to that of the Anglo-Saxon, for to possess my own civilization is to be free."

If both these dangers were to be realized, we should stand before Europe once more with our empire gone. But perhaps, after all, this will not happen. The empire may have been founded too firmly by valour upon the rock of freedom.

CHAPTER II

THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE

THE argument of this book, as stated in the previous chapter, sets out from three propositions. The first is that a series of powers has long contended for supremacy in Europe, a contest which is still in process. The next is that, on the gradual revelation of the four continents outside Europe, the area of this struggle was slowly but immensely widened to comprise almost the whole world. For the outer peoples were, as a whole, so disorganized as to provide little more than a field for European ambitions. Thus, since the sixteenth century, upon the old, internal, domestic strife of Europe there has been grafted a combat of immeasurably wider issues and significance. The third proposition was that England, already deeply engaged in opposing any would-be master of the continent, became, from the sixteenth century onward, even more deeply interested in resisting any would-be master of the world. It was to make good this latter resolution that she has organized her empire, to be a bulwark of friendly communities raised against such aspirants.

Only the first two propositions are the subject of this chapter. The internal contest within Europe stands to be considered first.

Previous to the definite disclosure of the outer

world to the Christian powers, the internal struggle for the hegemony of Europe had been long in process. By a significant coincidence it had been the Papacy which had opened that era as soon as the Dark Ages had passed away. The tenant of the graveyard of the Cæsars hoped to reconstitute the empire of Rome. It was as though the blood of the pagan emperors had stirred in the veins and rushed to the heads of the vicars of Christ, ever tempting them with the desire of universal possession. Kings stronger than Julius or Trajan ever knew, acknowledged their supremacy, and the bearing of the papal envoys in the courts of Europe was like the tread of legionaries enlisted for the conquest of the world.

But as the centuries proceeded that dream was dissipated, and other claimants arrived to dispute the title of the pontiffs. In the centre of Europe there arose in due course the family of the Hapsburg, that is, the stronghold of the vultures. These Hapsburgs grew slowly in weight and influence, until at length they rose to be Holy Roman Emperors. As their hopes expanded they took the ambitious anagram, "*Austriæ est imperare orbi universo*" ("It is the mission of Austria to rule the world.") Thus the once petty counts of the castle of the vultures had seen in the sky that same omen which Romulus saw, when he noticed seven vultures in the heaven above him, and accepted the omen, and founded Rome.

As the Middle Ages ended, it was wonderful to observe what powers became concentrated in the hands of that fortunate race. One branch ruled at Vienna, another at Madrid, yet these high dignities were but items in the catalogue of their manifold rights and privileges. They were served by an

incomparable Spanish soldiery and seamen of a daring hitherto unknown, hardened and fanaticized in ages of domestic war against the infidel. For the buttresses of their throne they had such men as Gonsalvo, the Great Captain, and Alexander of Parma, and Don John of Austria, the geniuses of an age of action. The house of Valois, and of Solyman, and of St. Peter bowed down before them. They annexed Portugal, and with Portugal that other half of the world not till then their own. Yet, in spite of all, their age was over by the middle of the seventeenth century, and the France of Louis XIV. supplanted them.

“The foundation and aim of the policy of Louis XIV. was this, that his house should acquire the supremacy which the house of Hapsburg had held for 130 years.”* This ambition of France for the domination of Europe was the lever and central point of continental politics down to the fall of Napoleon in 1815. The Papacy and Spain, around whom in past ages had moved the whole system of Europe, now became the mere satellites of her ascendancy. As for Germany, Austria, and Italy, they were torn and distracted by a thousand weaknesses, so that France was often more strong through the debility of others than by virtue of her own domestic vigour. As she moved towards her desired end, the blows which she received were terrible, yet she seemed to recuperate without fail. Men thought that Marlborough had ruined her, yet in a few years’ time she was as threatening as before.†

* Döllinger, “Studies in European History,” p. 296.

† Bolingbroke, “Study of History,” letter viii.; Frederick II. of Prussia, “Histoire de Mon Temps,” vol. i. p. 37; “Chesterfield’s Letters,” Bradshaw’s edition, 1892, vol. i. p. 136. All these passages show that, in the view of these respective authorities, France again dominated Europe.

Later on, Frederick the Great appeared to have accomplished what Marlborough had failed to achieve, yet soon after, on the eve of the French Revolution, France had regained a commanding position in Europe, being surrounded on all sides by feeble and divided states. Under Napoleon, the great classic, who with his just instinct for history always recognized himself as the inheritor of the Cæsars, she was bled almost to death in the desperate pursuit of the incomparable prize.

On the fall of Napoleon, it was Russia who stepped into the place vacated by France. Some fifty years previously Frederick the Great had declared that "Russia is a terrible power; in another half-century she will be making all Europe tremble." Napoleon had felt the meaning of that forecast, and, indeed, his fortunes during the latter years of the empire had turned upon the attitude of the Czar. Accordingly, after 1815 Russia began to display herself, in the words of Metternich, as "a power that is always wanting something more;"* or, in the words of Palmerston, she "pursued a system of universal aggression on all sides."† For the virus of Roman ambition, which had been transferred in old days from Rome to Constantinople, had, on the capture of Constantinople, travelled to Moscow, and thence by an easy journey to St. Petersburg. "God has given me power over the nations,"‡ had been the exclamation of the Czar Peter. Those words were

* "La Russie est une puissance toujours voulant;" "Mémoires," vol. iv. p. 529; Metternich to Esterhazy, December 18, 1828.

† Ashley, "Life of Lord Palmerston," vol. i. p. 296; December 3, 1833.

‡ Rambaud, "History of Russia," vol. ii. chap. ii.

the apocalypse of the towering ambition of the Slav.

Nevertheless, as the nineteenth century continued, an accumulation of difficulties embarrassed the progress of Russia. Although she managed to secure France as her ally, just as France in the eighteenth century had procured Spain as the adjutant of her designs, yet she found herself hampered by a formidable rival in the gate. The new power was Germany. Teutonic Germany thought that the Latin and the Slav had had their day. It may be said that the supremacy of the Pope, of the Hapsburgs, and of France had each rested in turn upon the political weakness and confusion of central Europe. But now, to the vexation of Russia, Prince Bismarck created Germany, and placed her at the head of a triple alliance of the powers of central Europe. The vexation of Russia was all the more keen in that during the earlier stages of the century Germany, or more accurately Prussia, had humbled herself before the mighty power across the Niemen. In all the European combinations of those days, as Prince Bismarck once said, Prussia accepted and honoured Russian cheques; or, he said again, that prior to 1866 Prussia could only claim the title of a great power *cum grano salis*.

But, in whichever direction the scales of power may turn in the future, it is enough that, from the European standpoint, Russia and Germany constitute the heaviest weights on either side. Any one who would undertake to prophecy the final result should remember the words of Lord Bolingbroke—

“The precise point at which the scales of power turn, like that of the solstice in either tropic, is imperceptible to common observation; and, in one case

as in the other, some progress must be made in the new direction, before the change is perceived."

Thus the internal political life of Europe, so hopelessly complicated in appearance, has a relatively simple clue. It revolves, and has revolved since the eleventh century, round the question of the amalgamation of that continent under one authority or its division into many independent governments. Since the chaos of the barbarians, a series of movements towards such a unification has been constantly in process, proving the main source and origin of the countless perturbations of the West. But though the main history of Europe has consisted in the ascent of a series of powers towards a general predominance, each has failed in that aspiration. Out of the sheer necessity for self-preservation, England has always ranged herself decisively with the party of resistance; her arms or diplomacy have been strenuously exercised in that direction; and she may fairly be considered to have done more for the cause of freedom than all the other nations of Europe together. Hence has sprung that animosity which she has incurred upon the continent by those whose ambitions she has broken, or whose ambitions, as in the case of Russia and Germany, she is impartially prepared to break.

So far, emphasis has been laid upon this contest within the boundaries of Europe and upon our participation, without mentioning that, as it proceeded, it began insensibly to widen and deepen in character. New continents began to come within the ken and scope of the European rivals; and these continents, as will be shown, were politically so inferior, or even so utterly impotent, that Europe treated them merely

as new ground whence to draw supplies for the time-honoured struggle or whereon to fight it out on a larger scale. England gradually awoke, at the close of the sixteenth century, to this new aspect of the world's affairs.

It happened, then, that as the conflict for the possession of Europe was in full process, there became grafted upon it a not less momentous conflict for the possession of the outer world. The first step towards the systematic discovery of the outer world, by which is meant the four continents of Africa, Asia, America, and Australia, were taken early in the fifteenth century by Prince Henry the Navigator, of Portugal. His explorations and conquests were limited by a point on the coast of West Africa. The era thus inaugurated occupied the enormous span of nearly five centuries, and was only completed in our own day on the discovery of the Congo region by Henry Stanley. It is singular that, having embraced the habitable globe in the interval, we took nearly five centuries to push a few miles forward upon the west of Africa; and that it needed Henry the Explorer to accomplish what Henry the Navigator began.

Although the four continents thus gradually brought into contact with Europe differed profoundly from each other on points innumerable, there was one broad characteristic of the most profound importance which was common to all alike. Political life of a high order had little or no existence throughout the peoples of the outer world. Some were barbarous, and had always been so; others had declined from a higher level of civilization, and were thus by comparison in decay. None were animated by the clear and indubitable signs of

progress. None were climbing towards a view of wider horizons and loftier summits in Church and State.

To confirm this statement of the political debility of the extra-European peoples, let us glance backwards at the original condition of each continent. That of America, at the date of its discovery, was extraordinarily infirm in this respect. Its inhabitants are reckoned not to have exceeded 4,000,000 persons altogether.* Of these, some were gathered into the barbaric monarchies of Peru and Mexico, which fell so easily before the arms of Cortes and Pizarro; while the remainder, sparsely scattered over that vast area, were little more than the irreclaimable children of the wilderness.

Far more populous, at the date of its final opening to European influence, was the continent of Africa. Its population numbered about 130,000,000, thanks to the prolific nature of the negro race.† Unfortunately, these, too, like the aborigines of America, stood, as a whole, deplorably low in the scale of civilization, and were even descending to a degradation still more complete. Slavery, its causes and its consequences, had produced this terrible result. "The radical vice of the Sudan," says the conqueror and organizer of West Africa, in words very applicable to all the centre of that continent, "the disease which, until cured, must arrest all intellectual and material progress, is the general, constant, and intense prevalence

* Scott Keltie, "Partition of Africa," edition of 1893, p. 2: "It is doubtful if the total population of the American continent exceeded 4,000,000; the population of North America was not much more than half a million."

† Ravenstein's estimate; quoted by Scott Keltie, "Partition of Africa," p. 433.

of slave-raiding."* It was a marvel that life, it was an impossibility that progress, could exist under such conditions of horror; and, according to the verdict of another high authority on Africa—

"In some respects, I think the tendency of the negro for several centuries past has been an actually retrograde one. As we come to read the unwritten history of Africa by researches into languages, manners, customs, traditions, we seem to see a backward rather than a forward movement going on for some thousand years past—a return towards the savage and even the brute."†

Clearly such peoples could present no front against the advance of Europe, and consequently at the Berlin Conference the great proportion of that vast area was carved up and apportioned with ease and expedition. As for what remained over,

"it may be taken as a certain axiom that within a very short period from now there will be no independent native state existing in Africa; that is to say, no independent native state sufficiently powerful and civilized to stand alone without the overlordship of some European power."‡

Proceeding from America and Africa to Australia, the same story is to be told. "When Australia was discovered it is doubtful if the native population amounted to more than half a million, belonging to the lowest types of humanity."§ In the Australian bush I remember trying to ascertain what account

* Sir George Goldie, Introduction to Vandeleur's "Campaigning on the Upper Nile and Niger," pp. xii. and xiii.

† Sir Harry Johnston, lecture on "England's Work in Central Africa," Royal Colonial Institute, vol. xxviii., December 8, 1896.

‡ Sir Harry Johnston, *ibid.*, p. 60.

§ Scott Keltie, "Partition of Africa," p. 3.

“the black fellows,” as they are called, could give of their origin. But it appeared that it is not etiquette for any member of that species to refer to his ancestors. They have no history, and, with a fine regard for their forbears, are decided not to have one.

So far, then, as the three continents of America, Africa, and Australia are concerned, their inhabitants were, as a whole, far gone towards savagery when brought into contact with Europe, and were quite incapable of offering a successful resistance in the long run to any organized European assailants. True, they dealt us many a rude and cruel blow. True that many a fastness remained, if not impregnable, at least untaken for generations. By the shores of the great lakes of Canada I have seen many a spot where the Huron or the Iroquois dipped his red hands deep in the white man's blood; or, in the heart of Zululand, have stood at the graves of Englishmen beneath the tragic Isandhlana Hill. But such instances, however multiplied, do but confirm the generalization that, from the moment of their contact with races so vastly superior as the European, the natives of America, of Africa, and of Australia were inevitably bound to succumb to the sovereignty of the old world.

Last of all, Asia remains for consideration, in area the largest of the continents, and comprising within its borders considerably over one half of mankind.* Judging from its vast extent, its fine resources, its teeming numbers, and warlike men, its traditions of conquest, its glittering monarchies, and its high fanaticism, it might well be thought that here at

* Asia, 17,300,000 square miles; America, 16,000,000 square miles. Asia, 850,000,000 inhabitants; the world 1,500,000,000 inhabitants.

least was a civilized structure far superior to European attack. But in the East glory and havoc are interchangeably allied.

It was at the commencement of the sixteenth century that Asia was definitely opened to Europe by the recent discovery of the sea route round the Cape of Good Hope. At that momentous epoch the continent resembled a mosaic of vigour and of decadence strangely dovetailed and indented, but with the latter feature decidedly the more pronounced. The central regions, once the ganglion and perhaps the source of civilization, had long been drying up. Where were the hanging gardens of Babylon? Persia, the home of Saadi and Hafiz and Firdusi, the classic ground of the rose, the winecup, and the nightingale, was shrinking into nothing better than a series of deserts,* and the traveller might well smile at the bombastic proverb, "Isfahan nush-el-jehan," "Isfahan is half the world." Further west, the city of Haroun-al-Raschid seemed destined to fulfil the lamentation of the Hebrew prophet: "The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap;" † or where men sought for Tyre, "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth," for all reply there came the same stern voice down the centuries, "Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste." ‡

The case, however, was different if the traveller descended from the barren north and centre of Asia

* Cf. Valentine Chirol, "The Middle Eastern Question," p. 134.

† Isaiah, xvii. 1.

‡ Ibid., xxiii. 8 and 14.

towards the more fertile and populous territories abutting on the seaboard of the south and east. Here powerful, or at any rate pretentious, governments faced the European advance from the sea.

For many ages, since the year 1000, indeed, the teeming cradle land of Asia, which had sent its sons westward to the conquest of Constantinople, had been also overflowing eastward into Hindostan. Dynasty after dynasty of Mohammedan chieftains, transplanted from the mountains of the north-west, had lorded it over yonder broad and blazing plains, without affixing any deep root, be it said, into that stubborn and intractable soil of Hinduism. But now, at the opening of the sixteenth century, they, too, had illustrated the pronouncement of Gibbon that all Asiatic dynasties are "one unceasing round of valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy, and decay." The race of conquerors had sunk into a quarrelling crowd, an aristocratic mob of rapacious and turbulent chiefs;* so that perhaps India, like America, would present a helpless and inert carcass for the spoilers from Europe.

It so happened, however, that for two centuries to come the precise contrary proved to be the case. This recuperation was due to the descent from Afghanistan of a fresh family, in whose veins was mixed the blood of the Turk and the Mongol, of Timur and Genghiz Khan, and who, under the appellation of the Great Moguls, formed perhaps the most remarkable line of princes since the days of the Cæsars.

Nevertheless, as the seventeenth century proceeded,

* Cf. Stanley Lane-Poole, "Mediæval India, under Mohammedan Rule," p. 191.

the dominion of the Moguls showed indubitable signs of decay. At the opening of the eighteenth century the collapse was utter, the phrase of Gibbon was once more justified, and this time India fell before the European, like another Mexico or another Peru.

Still further east the invading European would be met by the empire of China. But in the sixteenth century all her ancient affluence and prosperity was mostly a dream of antiquity; since then rapine and disorder had mastered the once powerful empire, and, in a word, "the general trend of the nation's history was downwards."* Downwards it continued to be, until the accession in 1644 of the present Manchu dynasty, which maintained the impression or the imposture of the greatness of China till the close of the eighteenth century. Since that date, no need to dwell upon the visible symptoms of political decadence, so lamentably revealed.

The last Asiatic power capable, it might be, of barring the progress of Europe was Japan. According to the Kojiki, the Ancient Records or Bible of the Dai Nippon, the gods, standing one day on the floating bridge of heaven, reached a spear downwards and stirred the brine of the China Sea. But, as they drew it up, the drops ran down the fine blade of the weapon, and, where they fell, formed the nucleus of those innumerable islands which constitute the empire of Japan. So it was life, and not death, as in the "Faery Queen" of Spenser, which sate on the point of the enchanted spear. But now, in the sixteenth century, Japan was nothing better than a wild scene of feudal anarchy. From this melancholy

* Professor Douglas, "China," p. 55.

confusion she was, indeed, soon to be restored to a better level, chiefly by a series of three remarkable men, Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu, who quelled anarchy, reorganized society, and kept Europe at arm's length by a policy which was maintained after them for two and a half centuries until our own epoch. Consequently, for ages Japan, if now more orderly, was, nevertheless, a mere negative force, a hermit nation, repudiating any contact with Europe, and thus to be dismissed as of no account in the immediate issue as to the possession of the Asiatic mainland.

Asia, then, like America, Africa, and Australia, was unequal to the task of defence against the conquering energies of modern Europe. Renan once said that "there were never Assyrian patriots." * Asiatic patriots were as yet unknown either. That was the deep secret of Asia's incapacity. "The gospel of high political morality is a complete novelty and a new light among Asiatic rulers." † If they were to receive that gospel, it would be by way of Europe or of Europeanized Japan.

Accordingly, the outer world of four continents was found to consist, in spite of its gigantic area and various populations, of nothing better than helpless savages and monarchies either discredited or of fortuitous strength. This was a fact of inestimable importance for the European peoples. If it had been composed not of weak but of mighty nations, not of disorganized but of progressive governments, not of armies who would run but of armies

* Renan, "Qu' est ce qu' une nation ?" Lecture at the Sorbonne, March 11, 1882.

† Sir Alfred Lyall, "Asiatic Studies," first series, p. 322, *et seq.*

eager to take the field against us, Europe would have been obliged at once to abandon her own internal conflict, already so long waged round the problem of her domestic organization, and would have been forced to combine in all her members against a Yellow, or a Brown, or a Red Peril. Precisely the opposite was the case when it was discovered that the population of the outer world was as a deer to be hunted, not as a lion who would slay. The internal struggle went forward in Europe, not only unabated, but actively stimulated by the knowledge that to possess Europe would be henceforth equivalent to the possession of the globe. Correspondingly, the European nations began to fight each other for a foothold in the outer world as well, convinced that victory in that quarter would procure them predominance at home. Thus the arena of the world's battle was slowly but immeasurably widened. In Europe men fought for America and Asia; in America and Asia men fought for Europe. The only change was that in these far more spacious lists the charging knights could gather a doubly fierce momentum in their old accustomed tourney for the universal prize.

The attitude adopted by England towards the internal and, as it were, domestic battle already being waged century after century within the confines of Europe has already been defined. She had opposed, and would oppose in rotation, every intending master of that continent, like Tarquin of old, ever striking the proudest lilies with her rod. For her very existence was inextricably associated with the maintenance of the liberties of Europe. Therefore she had determined to have no more Cæsars. And now that, by

a new complication, the outer world, with its four immense continents, was coming within the range of European conquest, her essential and central position was unaltered, and her will the same as before. As she had necessarily defended the liberties of Europe, so, equally, she must defend the liberties of the world.

In order to defend those liberties, she found it imperative, as will now be shown, to construct the British empire. Freedom, rescued by her efforts, placed the orb of empire in her hand.

CHAPTER III

THE DELAY OF THE EMPIRE

It is time to approach the third proposition mentioned at the opening of the preceding chapter, and to show that this formidable progress of the European nations in the outer world constituted the genuine cause of the British empire. For that empire has not been the fruit of chance or carelessness, as some suppose; nor of commercial rapacity, as is the creed of others. No doubt our people who go abroad to make their fortunes are as energetic as, or more energetic than, any others. But when it comes to a question of empire, that is, to the annexation of territory, it is the statesman who has to say yes or no.

In this connection it is of considerable importance to observe that England did not exert herself to seize an empire as soon as the new world was revealed. On the contrary, she was not only extraordinarily slow in grappling with the opportunities of empire afforded by that revelation, but also, when she did commence to play her part, her rivals had so forestalled and outrun her as to negative her initial efforts. If this can be indicated successfully, it constitutes a primary link in the chain of the argument; for in that case it would not be greed of territory, at any rate, which would be our motive for empire. Besides, if our empire has been built up in defiance

of existing claimants so as to be threatened from the days of its origin, then clearly its inhabitants, at home and abroad, would from the first be profoundly influenced by the presence of such a danger; and, if that danger continued to be urgent, would be deeply concerned to maintain the connection. But the extent of that subsequent pressure and its result on the empire is beyond the scope of the present chapter, which is concerned only with the original motive for our formation of any empire at all.

It might well be thought that when the new world was discovered at the close of the fifteenth century, England would have eagerly stretched out her hands. She was at peace within, now that the Wars of the Roses were finished; while, without, the dismal generations of the Hundred Years' War with France were far behind. Yet for over half a century the public mind was singularly indifferent to this wonderland beyond the waters, whatever a monarch or a minister might now and then attempt.

Surely our writers, in an age so active-minded as that of the Reformation and the Renaissance, had much to say upon the matter. But it was actually far otherwise; and until so late as the marriage of Philip and Mary "the new world is scarcely mentioned in English literature."* Indeed, it is possible to assert that it was Eden's book, published in 1555, and entitled "Decades of the New World," which first rendered us acquainted with the results of maritime discovery, and struck a new vein in the imagination of the English people.

The case with our thinkers was the case also with

* "The Age of Discovery," *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. i. p. 51.

our men of action. True that Henry VII. commissioned the Cabots for their voyage of discovery to the West. But we reaped no particular benefit and pursued no clear advantage. True that Henry VIII. first organized the navy as a standing force and has earned the title of its father. Yet the effort was spasmodic, and under Queen Mary we had to make the melancholy confession to her husband Philip that the fleet was not competent to put to sea. True that from the close of the fifteenth century our fishing smacks adventured on the banks of Newfoundland, as they had done in Iceland before. But even if our seagulls alighted on those island shores one moment, they winged away the next. In a word, it was not till the first half of the sixteenth century was ended that the continuous action of England on the high seas began with the voyages of Willoughby and Chancellor. Up till then the ancient description of an English seaman by Chaucer might still have held good, who said of him that there was none such from Hull unto Carthage, and that he knew all the havens "fro' Gotland to the Cape de Finisterre."

What, then, were the causes of this strange indifference upon our part to the new world of India on the one side and America on the other?

After all, we had never been adventurous to any notable degree. For full four centuries, since the close of the Dark Ages, maritime discovery had been in process, and England had done nothing, except that a runaway Englishman had discovered Madeira by chance. None of the famous mediæval explorers were Englishmen; none of the great mediæval discoveries can be laid to our account.* The new

* Cf. Beazley, in "Social England," vol. iv. p. 347.

world opened upon an English people unprepared for ocean travel. During two centuries we had fought on the soil of France, and if we had claimed any sovereignty upon the waters it was only the sovereignty of the Narrow Seas. We were apathy itself, a statute of Henry VII. speaking of "the grete mynishing and decaye . . . of the navie within this Realme of England and ydelnesse of the mariners within the same."

This depression of spirits had its own psychology. In the long space of the Middle Ages we had incurred two successive enmities with the Papacy and with France, not to mention an enmity with Scotland scarcely less troublesome than these. But at the date of the discovery of the new world all these opponents had won at our expense. The antipapal movement of Wycliffe had perished; we had been evicted from France with the loss of all our foothold except Calais; while Scotland was a more inveterate foe than ever. Hence we were a people without the spirit to seize the astounding prize which Columbus and Gama had proffered to mankind.

And, besides, our population had declined woefully since the early days of Edward III. In the fierce pestilential night of the Middle Ages which had intervened, our numbers had dwindled so sharply that on the accession of Henry VII. we could only muster a bare two and a half million persons.* The population was to grow to five millions under Elizabeth.

Besides this initial cause, far-reaching economic decay pierced into the bone and marrow of our people during the first half of the sixteenth century, hampering our national energies and poisoning our life at its

* "Social England," vol. iii. p. 170, illustrated edition.

root. In that time the prices of the necessaries of life doubled.* The resultant misery was incalculable, more especially as this revolution was largely due to three unwholesome causes, the abandonment of tillage for pasture, the sudden transfer of one-third of the national wealth caused by the destruction of the monasteries, and the disgraceful series of measures taken to debase the currency. All these changes would tend to upset and embitter the life of the country and spoil us for the mighty task.

To add another economic cause, our debasement of the currency checked the inflow of the precious metals into the country, by the operation of a well-known law. But to the minds of that age the worth of the new world was measured chiefly by its production of gold and silver. Till the currency reform of Elizabeth the precious metals avoided us who were engaged on their depreciation, so that, as late as the early days of the queen, America did not exercise this potent attraction for the average Englishman.

But besides these domestic reasons for our lack of interest in Utopia, there were others of a more profound influence founded in the high politics of the West.

At first sight it would appear that the epoch stretching from the discovery of the new world up to the accession of Elizabeth provided us with an unexampled opportunity to obtain an empire oversea. For during that considerable span the only two European powers, France and Spain, who counted for anything, were at deadly odds. The close of the

* As early as 1534 a statute of Henry VIII. declares that certain causes "have raised the prices of all manner of agricultural commodities almost double."

Middle Ages was a time of singular exaltation for France: she was left prosperous and whole; and accordingly, in the last decade of the fifteenth century, and in the flush of her strength, she made her bold bid for the dominion of Italy, a policy which she did not practically abandon until the date of the accession of Elizabeth. All those sixty or seventy years she was wrestling with Spain for the possession of Italy; there were many breathing-spaces for the two rivals, but Italy was the issue that animated them throughout. Spain won at last, but during the absorption of the combatants in the long consuming effort of the contest, why did not England take the opportunity of establishing herself in the new world?

It must be remembered, however, as against this, that, apart from the lethargy of England already described, there was a grave consideration of practical politics which tied our hands and checked our intrusion. Immediately on the discovery of the new world, it had been duly partitioned between the joint pioneers, Spain and Portugal. Portugal, though nominally independent of Spain, with whom she was not completely amalgamated until the days of Elizabeth, was naturally her staunch ally in the policy of excluding other races from the wide arena so suddenly opened up. Any advance of England would accordingly have met with strenuous opposition from the Iberian peninsula. But until 1525, at any rate, the European interests of England demanded that Spain and Portugal should be her friends. If they were necessarily her friends in Europe, she could not possibly rob Portugal of her Indian empire in one direction and Spain of her American domain in the other. Friendly fingers held the keys of the new

world against England and gently waved her aside, signifying that even for her there was no admittance.

This friendship between ourselves and Spain subsisted up to 1525 for a serious reason. The broad rule which has always regulated our action in Europe has been opposition to the rising master of the continent, since the liberties of Europe are coincident with the security of the island world. Up till that date it was France who was obviously the aggressive power, and on the whole we decided that we must still confront our ancient mediæval enemy. This resolution naturally inclined us towards the Spanish alliance, and thus made it impossible that we should march with drums beating and flying colours against the Spanish preserves oversea. In 1525, however, the battle of Pavia raised Charles V. to almost his highest pitch of glory and power, and it therefore appeared proper that we should henceforth dispose ourselves against the Emperor, as, indeed, for many years subsequent we actually did.* Hence, after 1525, it seemed far more probable that we should launch out into the acquisition of an empire; yet, even still, high political causes forbade.

During the generation and more which elapsed between the battle of Pavia and the accession of Elizabeth, we certainly began by flouting Spain to the uttermost, when we evicted the Pope and heaped the last insults upon Catherine of Aragon—a fine assertion of insular independence, made possible by the diversion against Charles V. effected elsewhere by Martin Luther and Solyman the Magnificent. But we were always very careful not to go too far. At any moment the balance of European affairs might revolve

* Cf. "The Enemies of England," pp. 99-101.

in favour of France; in that event we should have France upon our shoulders, and so we must not hopelessly embroil ourselves with Spain. Accordingly, it is very apposite to notice that, having fairly broken with the Pope and established our freedom, we began from about 1538 to swing back towards Spain, entering presently into a desultory and half-hearted war with France. Under Edward VI. we veered back against Spain; under Mary we reverted towards her. Like a pendulum, pushed to and fro, backwards and forwards, between the mighty combatants in the continental ring, we were in no position to range ourselves once for all against the Spanish empire by delivering an assault upon that new world which she claimed under the international law of Europe.

Such were the complex causes, of external politics and domestic economy, which during the first half of the sixteenth century precluded us from attending to any possibilities of empire.

As the first half of the century ended, our interest in the new world awoke at last, stimulated, no doubt, by the presence of Philip himself amongst us as the husband of Queen Mary, and as the presumptive master of that stupendous empire the gates of which he could unlock at pleasure on our behalf.* But on his disappearance with the death of Mary, and his entry into the number of our enemies, the gates of that Eldorado were slammed in our face. What was not merely a disappointment but a danger, the tremendous progress of the Spanish empire, now approaching

* Cf. Alexander Brown, "The Genesis of the United States," vol. i. p. 3, of Introductory Sketch: "In this reign, of Philip and Mary, many English merchants visited, inspected, and gained a knowledge of King Philip's possessions in America."

its zenith as France declined, imperatively warned us to put on our armour if we would escape that annexation which had so nearly been an accomplished fact under Philip and Mary. It was this shock from without which stirred the nation so profoundly and primed it for the action which now seemed necessary.

Accordingly, it was only under the pressure of Spanish ascendancy that we began to realize the imperative necessity of empire. Writing so late as 1589, Hakluyt, our Homer of the sea, declared as his reason some years back for having undertaken his work, that "I both heard in speech and read in books other nations miraculously extolled for their discoveries and notable enterprises by sea, but the English of all others for their sluggish security and continual neglect of the like attempts."* Modern eulogies upon our innate colonizing and seafaring proclivities are misplaced. Equally misplaced are invectives directed against our essential hunger and thirst for territorial acquisitions. In actual fact, we were originally indisposed to such enterprises, and it was only the alarming growth of Spain in power and resources derived from her world-wide extension that impelled us to quit our attitude of almost complete indifference. We avoided empire as long as possible, and we set to work upon it only when we needs must.

The career of Sir Walter Raleigh, the true prophet of Greater Britain, illustrates this observation. That all-accomplished genius was the earliest missionary

* Richard Hakluyt, "The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation," edition of 1903, vol. i.; Epistle Dedicatorie to Sir Francis Walsingham in the first edition of 1589.

of the thought that England must acquire an empire or perish. In season and out, he laboured by every resource of example and eloquence, and lavished every item of his expenditure, to cut deep into the minds of his countrymen the conviction that North America should be acquired by us before Spain could possess it. At least let Virginia, and even Guiana, be English for a beginning. In the account in which he celebrated Grenville's single-handed fight on the *Revenge* against fifteen Spanish battleships, he remarks of the Spaniards that they behave "as if the Kings of Castile were the natural heirs of the world." He would at all hazards veto that inheritance.

"What he wanted," his biographer justly says, "was a firm foothold for his countrymen on the northern continent of America, which should overbalance the over-weening power of the Spaniards in the south . . . to him is due the undying glory of having made the great northern continent of America an English-speaking country. With him it was not accident. The plan sprang fully formed from his great brain."*

Once let Spain absorb the whole American continent, as well she might, England would have short shrift, and freedom would have short shrift also. In Trinidad, on his Guiana expedition, Raleigh struck that chord by telling the assembled native chiefs that

"he was the servant of a queen who was the great cacique of the North, that she was an enemy of the Castellanos in respect of their tyranny and oppression, and that she delivered all such nations about her as were by them oppressed, and having freed all the coast of the northern world from their servitude, had sent him to free them also."

* Martin A. S. Hume, "Sir Walter Raleigh," edition of 1897, pp. 66-67, 303.

There sounded the true note of the British empire, an empire built at the call and on the specification of freedom endangered alike in the old world and the new.

If it was Raleigh who saw deepest into the needs of the case, and who grasped the necessity of meeting Spain by organizing an empire of our own, others awoke too, and presently followed upon the same lines. As the most authoritative documents of that age have now demonstrated,

“ever since Philip’s conquest of Portugal in 1580 had placed Spain in the position of a first-rate naval power, Drake, backed by Leicester, Walsyngham, and Hawkyns, had been endeavouring to get permission to check the further development of the Spanish power by an attack on her oceanic trade and colonies.”*

To attack Spain’s colonies was the first step in the acquisition of our own.

Those who argue that our empire is due to the miscellaneous and unguided impulses of our people, and not to the policy of the nation as directed by our statesmen, will naturally believe that an empire was now to be definitely established in the reign of Elizabeth by the agency of this popular enthusiasm. The precise contrary was the case. The Elizabethan government, though it often yielded to the popular importunities, was never wholly favourable to the foundation of an oversea empire, and accordingly no empire was to be founded as yet.

The popular movement was destined to issue in a catalogue of numerous and disastrous failures.

* “Papers relating to the Navy during the Spanish War, 1585-87,” edited by Julian S. Corbett, 1898, Introduction, p. viii.

Enough to have repelled Spain. The repulse of Spain was the true political achievement of the Elizabethan statesmanship. But when we passed from self-defence to the organization of empire, from beating the successive armadas to planting our sovereignty in the new world, our misadventure was deplorable and our statesmen lukewarm. They had another end in view.

In no less than seven important regions of exploration and dominion England's record was failure. Being excluded from the southern passages to the Far East by way of the Horn westward, and eastward by way of Good Hope, we made trial of a north-east passage, to begin with, by way of Russia. This resulted in the Muscovy Company, but early in the seventeenth century the period of troubles, as the Russian historians term it, had so broken the field of our operations that, whereas in past years "we sent store of goodly ships to trade in those parts, three years past we sent out but four, and this last year two or three."*

North-west, whatever Humphry Gilbert had prescribed, or Martin Frobisher and Henry Hudson had practised, we fared no better.

Passing south, our energies were next directed to the region of Canada, or rather to the islands and promontories which form the threshold and doorway to that domain. But in the age of Elizabeth our enterprise stuck, and was strangled, in the entry; whereas, in the year succeeding the queen's death, the French pushed through, and presently inaugurated that successful colony on the St. Lawrence which was to

* Sir Walter Raleigh, "Works," vol. 8, edition 1829, p. 365, "Observations touching trade and commerce."

begin with Champlain and end with Montcalm on the heights of Abraham.

Proceeding south again, the next notorious attempt was the planting of a colony in Virginia not long before the Armada. But it was in vain that Raleigh, by a stretch of favour, was authorized "to occupy and enjoy the same for ever." It was in vain that, in later years, its author wrote from his prison that he should yet live to see it an English nation. The scheme collapsed, for the colonists departed.

Still deeper in the dangerous south there was the enterprise for the annexation of the fabulous empire of Guiana in South America, with its amazons and golden city, undertaken in the closing years of the sixteenth century. The leader was officially empowered by an unusually bold decree to "offend and enfeeble the King of Spain," and he announced that his purpose was to "subdue and annex it to the crown imperial of this realm of England."* But the King of Spain was too well posted in the south for any such forlorn hope to prevail against him; Pizarro and Cortes had not fought for a result so tame.

Nor if we had fared so ill in Europe and America, was our success any better in the African continent. At the very opening of Elizabeth's reign it was determined to establish ourselves in West Africa. But this was a Portuguese preserve, and the Portuguese envoy promptly came to protest emphatically.† However, as soon as Portugal was incorporated with Spain in 1580 and became our national enemy, the queen granted three charters in succession for the

* "Discoverie of Guiana," *ad init.*

† Paper in Record Office, dated May 27, 1562; *cf.* "The Great Lord Burghley," by Martin Hume, p. 119.

exploitation of the African trade. But the times were inauspicious, and when in 1618 an attempt was made to reconstruct and reorganize the business, it met with no success.*

The remaining continent of Asia was the scene of our last and most melancholy disaster of all, our expulsion from that far eastern empire in the spice archipelago stretching between Asia and Australia, which the Dutch have retained to our loss ever since. During almost the whole course of the sixteenth century the Portuguese had made the Indian Ocean a sea of their own. At the close of that epoch Dutch and English entered into a neck-and-neck race for the trade of the spice islands, a commerce all the more attractive now that the Moguls had consolidated their rule in India and could withstand any invader or intruder wishing to possess himself of Hindostan. But in the struggle for the empire of spices the Dutch won, and during the reign of James England was finally expelled from the richest archipelago in the world.

Seven disasters in four continents! Here was a gloomy chamber of horrors set in the midst of the bright and spacious halls of Elizabeth.

The fact was that, during the Elizabethan epoch, the pressure exercised from without, partly by France in Canada, partly by Portugal in Africa, partly by Holland in the spice empire, but above all by Spain, was so vigorous and universal that it must be considered as the main obstacle to our acquisition of an imperial seat.

Spain's influence against us began at Westminster. If we would realize how strong it was and how far it

* Sir Harry Johnston, "The Colonization of Africa," p. 105.

penetrated, there is the life of Burghley, that minister whose acts and thoughts were closely identified with English interests from the accession of Elizabeth to his death at the close of the century. For those forty years he worked "as none ever strove before to maintain peace between England and Spain." * He knew, to adopt his own favourite expression, that a realm gains more by one year's peace than by ten years' war; but he realized also, and above all, the far-reaching power of Spain. From the first he was the sworn foe of buccaneering adventures, which he described as detestable and impossible to last, † for sooner or later they would mean war with Philip. Animated by this conviction, he schemed to stop Drake's famous raid to Cadiz just before the Armada, and bitterly opposed his still more famous voyage round the world. So, too, Elizabeth hesitated for over six months before she knighted Drake on his triumphant return from that enterprise. As late as 1599, after Burghley's death, her Privy Council ordered the newly organized East India Company to defer any action in order to avoid giving offence to Madrid. ‡ Thus the real core of the Elizabethan policy was that the responsible statesmen of England very rarely felt themselves strong enough to do more than stand upon the defensive against Spain. Accordingly, the Elizabethan government could not persuade itself to back up colonial enterprise heartily on any such consistent and thorough system as alone could ensure success. No doubt that, as

* Martin Hume, "The Great Lord Burghley," p. 494.

† "Trade Notes, Domestic MSS.: Elizabeth," vol. 41. Rolls House.

‡ "Calendar of State Papers—East Indies, China, and Japan, 1513-1616," Preface by Sainsbury, and see p. 102.

Raleigh said, princes must sometimes look through their fingers as well as poor men ; * certainly Elizabeth often did so as regards the piracies of her seamen. But to organize a colonial empire was a different affair, and meant war to the knife with Philip. Bacon epitomized the matter in his work, "In Felicem Memoriam Elizabethæ," when he termed us during her reign "a shield and stronghold of defence against the then formidable and overbearing ambition of Spain." In those words is summarized the statesmanship, with its merits and limits, of the Elizabethan age.

Yet in a few years' time the determination of Raleigh was to find fulfilment, and our government was to annex the coast of America in defiance of Spain. It was a necessary resolution ; for our nation had come to know that Spain had inherited in her blood something of the old imperial Roman spirit, or something of the world-wide papal ambition ; or, rather, that she was infected with both of them, for the two were one. Therefore it was meet and right that England should bar the winding current of her ominous encroachment, in the name of her own safety, and in the name of the safety of Europe and the world.

* "Works," vol. viii. p. 308 ; "A Discourse touching a War with Spain."

CHAPTER IV

THE FOUNDING OF THE EMPIRE

THE preceding chapter surveyed that era of about a century and more in duration which followed upon the discovery of the new world. It showed that, during the first half of the period, England shut her eyes to the marvels and riches so suddenly revealed; but that, during the second half of the same epoch, she awoke perforce. "This lethargy and wonderful dozing," as an old writer described it,* was at length shaken off. She, too, after the long night of her mediæval ignorance, needed to become an adept in the school of empire. Nevertheless, in spite of that remarkable uprising, the antagonistic forces in the outer world proved too strong for this vague and popular enthusiasm, and our initial efforts failed.

The subject having been advanced up to this point, the purport of this chapter is to explain how, during the succeeding one hundred years, that is to say, up to the Peace of Utrecht concluded in 1713, we pushed forward, urged by the same necessity as had set our feet originally upon that way. Assisted by our government, our people succeeded in establishing themselves in several quarters of the globe, passing by slow degrees from misadventure to prosperity.

Next, it will be made clear that, upon the achievement of this better issue, and upon the establishment

* "Harleian Miscellany," vol. ii. p. 376.

of Englishmen beyond the waters, a grave and novel question came inevitably and immediately to the front. The empire that began to arise was born to independence of thought and action. As Burke said long after :

“A love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole . . . this fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies, probably, than in any other people of the earth . . . the people of the colonies are descendants of Englishmen. England is a nation which still, I hope, respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of your character was most predominant ; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands.”*

This being so, and our empire being thus composed of assertive and independent elements, perhaps our colonists would view the empire from a different standpoint to ourselves. However much we might regard them as our bulwark against our enemies, they might very possibly decline to accept that position. They might prefer to evade that risk and cut themselves adrift from so dangerous an association. Or perhaps they would fail to recognize the existence of any common danger, and would at once choose to stand apart on an independent footing.

What would our emigrants think as regards the motherland which they had left so far distant, and which had often proved a stepmother to them? Surely, in the bright Indies they would feel no pang for the acre or the garden plot of their fathers as they carved an empire for themselves ; in the electric air

* Speech on moving his resolutions for conciliation with the colonies, March 22, 1775.

of the American prairie they would forget the dull west country, and be glad to forget. They would have a Church, but not the Church of England, so tied and bound by the chain of the state; and thus from the fountain of a new creed new laws would issue, and from new laws new manners, and from all these together a New People.

Yet it must be said at once that, during the period considered in this chapter, that danger was averted and no great crisis came. The reason was that, though our emigrants did indeed love freedom, they found, even in that new world, such powerful antagonistic forces as to forbid, or at least to control, the thought of independence. The European world counted them as Englishmen, and applied its hostility to them as much as to the Englishmen still at home. When they tried now and then to dissociate themselves from the quarrels of the old world, it was in vain. They were not strong enough for independence; they were not weak enough to be ignored by Europe. They had entered into a world still hostile to them and full of peril, so that, if they would survive, they must keep to the side of England, as prudent and practical men. It was this external pressure which made and moulded our empire from the first.

To revert, however, to the founding of the empire, during the hundred years prior to the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, there were three principal regions in which Englishmen made their footing good, North America, the West Indies, and India. The circumstances of each settlement require a brief examination in order to ascertain how far what was stated in the preceding paragraph is correct.

In the first place, our government, after the

failures of the age of Elizabeth, decided that it was at length imperative to annex the American coast and organize an empire oversea in that quarter. This was done in 1606. It was a point-blank defiance to Spain. The Spanish archives of that date are filled from the first with plans for the destruction of this dominion. How can we stamp it out? is the burden of the Spanish despatches sent from their London ambassador to the court of Madrid; and these suggestions alternate with prophecies of its speedy ruin. On his side the monarch considers maturely "what steps had best be taken to prevent" the colony's continuance.* By 1610 the envoy thinks that "it would be very easy to make an end of it altogether by sending out a few ships";† while the king answers that a "remedy" must be invented soon or late. The ambassador, two years later, deems that "now is a very favourable time for their punishment;" and, indeed, at the opening of 1613, the colony seemed utterly doomed to destruction by an accumulation of disasters, while, to crown all, we heard from abroad that "the intent of the preparations which the King of Spain maketh by sea, is certainly to employ the same this spring for the removing of our plantation in Virginia."‡ Then very slowly the crisis lessened as the Spanish power weakened or was occupied elsewhere.

Nevertheless, in those early days, the dangers surrounding our colonists from foreign attack were

* Letter from His Majesty to Don Pedro de Zuñiga, dated Madrid, March 8, 1607.

† Don Alonso de Velasco to Philip III.; letter dated London, June 14, 1610.

‡ Alexander Brown, "The Genesis of the United States," vol. ii. p. 603; letter of Sir Thomas Edmondes to James I., dated Paris, January 26, 1613.

most threatening. In the library of Congress in the United States are to be read the instructions issued from home to the earliest founders of our American colonies. The advice given is to fortify and prepare for attack, "to the end that you be not surprised as the French were in Florida."* For when the French had attempted to found colonies where we had done so, they had been massacred by the Spaniards.

Unfortunately, while Spain slowly retired from the field of action in this quarter, France stepped forward and eventually challenged us in her stead.

However, during the major part of the seventeenth century the French colony in North America roused only a moderate apprehension in the breasts of Englishmen. It seemed easy enough to deal with those rivals, and it was without much difficulty that we took their chief settlement, Port Royal, and Quebec later, and, later still, a portion of Nova Scotia. These places were not retained by the English in any instance, and the last of them had been surrendered to France by the date of the Treaty of Breda in 1667. This general policy appears to furnish an indication that, up till that time at any rate, the power and ambition of France in America did not cause any serious alarm. Yet France was decidedly making progress, and three separate and successful raids which she launched against the English colonies in 1690 from her Canadian headquarters may perhaps be taken as marking the date when we realized that our position was seriously threatened by France.

* Instructions, dated 1606, to the first colonists of Virginia; in MSS. minutes of London Company, preserved in the library of Congress; 2 vols.

Meanwhile, our American empire had been strongly recruited with colonists, from 1629.

There are three awful years in the history of Protestantism to be marked as years of blood. The first was 1572, when, on the decision of the French king that "every Huguenot in France must perish," there was enacted the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. The third was the year 1685, which witnessed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV., coupled with the accession of a Roman Catholic monarch to the English throne. But the second was 1629, that year made memorable in Germany by the imperial Edict of Restitution confiscating the possessions of the Protestants, in France by the Peace of Alais so destructive of the political power of the Huguenots, and, finally, in England by the dismissal of Parliament and the predominance of Laud. *Excidat illa dies ævo*; that year might be blotted from the memory of Protestants, were it not that it witnessed also the grant by Charles I. of the Charter of Massachusetts and the birth of New England. It is upon the relations of Massachusetts and the mother country that attention may conveniently be concentrated, since that colony was incomparably the most important of the New England states. And besides, "the principles of New England spread at first to neighbouring states; then they passed successively to the more distant ones; and at length they imbued the whole Confederation." *

It may be asserted without exaggeration that Massachusetts was from the first determined on securing for herself as much independence as was compatible with her own safety. In narrating the rise

* De Tocqueville, "Democracy in America," chap. ii.

of that colony the learned historian of New England has not proceeded six months into his narrative ere he finds himself "conducted to the conclusion that . . . they had conceived a project no less important than that of laying the foundations of a nation of Puritan Englishmen." * A few years later, on the occasion of the reorganization of the constitution on somewhat more liberal lines, the same authority does not omit to notice that "the new democracy proved as little loyal to England as the magistracy, which had hitherto held unchecked sway." † Already they had been charged with rebellion before the Privy Council; already "it was doubted they would in a short time wholly shake off the royal jurisdiction." ‡ They proceeded to repudiate the English flag by striking out the cross, they erected a mint of their own, and they deliberately adopted the name of "commonwealth." § They formed with the smaller states around them a confederacy, of which the "principles were altogether those of independency." ||

Such an uncompromising attitude of defiance might very plausibly be attributed to their dislike of Laud and of Charles I., were it not that precisely the same attitude was next adopted by Massachusetts towards the Parliament. She treated of foreign affairs during that time "in the character of a state independent of all the world," ¶ and sent over a commissioner to claim that she possessed "a free donation of absolute

* Palfrey, "History of New England," vol. i. p. 308.

† Ibid., p. 376. This was in 1634.

‡ Ferdinando Gorges, "Briefe Narration," chap. xxvi.

§ Massachusetts, Col. Rec. I., pp. 87, 88, 118; see Palfrey, vol. i.

p. 499.

|| Chalmers, "Annals," p. 178.

¶ Palfrey, vol. ii. p. 150.

government."* Even when Cromwell succeeded to the supreme place, Massachusetts preserved a steady silence, and the death of the Protector is not so much as referred to in the public records.

Not much better was the position of affairs on the accession of Charles II. A memorandum, composed not long after that date, perhaps by Lord Clarendon, states that "it may be presumed that they will harden in their constitution, and grow on nearer to a commonwealth towards which they are well-nigh ripened."† A few years later John Evelyn wrote the words already quoted as regards the imminent prospect of their independence.‡

Their tendency towards self-assertion corresponded, in fact, to the temporary freedom from attack which they enjoyed in the interval between the fall of Spain and the rise of France. The measure of their safety was the measure of their independence. Up to 1675 there was "almost a suspension of political relations between New England and the parent country."§

This was an intolerable state of affairs. At length, in 1681, the home government determined to take action. A despatch was sent pointing out that the colonists had "from the very beginning used methods tending to the prejudice of the sovereign's right, and their natural dependence upon the Crown." It recited at length the extensive catalogue of their breaches of the charter, and their "many other irregularities,

* Winthrop, "History of New England," vol. ii. pp. 299-301.

† Dated 1664, entitled, "Considerations respecting the Commission to be sent out;" see Palfrey, vol. ii. pp. 578-9.

‡ Evelyn, "Memoirs." See above, chap. i. p. 10.

§ Palfrey, "History of New England," vol. iii. p. 273.

crimes, and misdemeanours." * As a final consequence, their charter was vacated in 1684 by a judgment in chancery, and was only restored, with modifications, after the fall of the Stuarts and the accession of William to the English throne." †

But, although the Stuarts had fallen, it would be an error to suppose that New England was to have her own way entirely henceforth. On the contrary, England began, in one respect at least, from the date of the Revolution of 1688, to pursue a more stringent policy towards the colonies than heretofore. That policy was embodied in the Navigation Acts.

It is the Act of 1660 which is usually termed the first Navigation Act, although, in fact, the first of that long series of ordinances was passed fifteen years earlier. Subsequent to 1660 two further Acts of this description were passed in the reign of Charles II.; ‡ but with the Revolution of 1688, and the advent to power of the commercial classes in England, it was decided to enforce the administration of these statutes more vigorously and to extend their scope, which policy had its outcome in a fourth Navigation Act, putting "the finishing touch to the colonial system so far as shipping was concerned.§

Assuredly such proceedings might well be expected to cause a revolutionary crisis in America. If

* Letter from King Charles II., dated October 21, 1681; see Chalmers, "Annals," pp. 443-449.

† "Select Charters illustrative of American History, 1606-1775," p. 205; this gives the second charter of Massachusetts, dated October, 1691.

‡ "Select Charters"; the dates of the three Navigation Acts of Charles II. are respectively 1660, 1663, and 1672; pp. 110, 133, and 168.

§ "Select Charters," p. 212. This Act is dated 1696, and cited as 7 & 8 Will. c. 22.

others had used whips, the Whigs were bent on the use of scorpions. And they did not drop the use of them.

In the words of Edmund Burke—

“The Act of Navigation, the corner-stone of the policy of this country with regard to its colonies, was the system of a monopoly. . . . This principle of commercial monopoly runs through no less than twenty-nine Acts of Parliament from the year 1660 to the unfortunate period of 1764.”*

It is with reason, then, that the eminent historian of the eighteenth century has pointed out that the Revolution of 1688 was “on the whole not favourable to America . . . , for the commercial classes who rose to power viewed with extreme jealousy the growing independence of the colonies,”† and a new system was established more favourable to the authority of the Crown. In 1719, at the close of the period under consideration in this chapter, the House of Commons went so far as to pass a resolution that the erecting of manufactories in the colonies tended to lessen their dependence upon Great Britain.

Why, then, if New England had been cradled in independence and had been nursed in an almost premature love of freedom, did she not revolt at once on the inauguration of this severer and more oppressive policy directed against her? It was because of the external pressure henceforth exercised upon her by France. It has already been pointed out that, simultaneously with our Revolution, France became really formidable. With such an enemy in the offing,

* Burke, speech on American Taxation, 1774.

† Lecky, “History of England in the Eighteenth Century,” vol. ii. p. 4.

New England of necessity fell into line with Old England, and independence blew its trumpet no more.

Yet it must not be inferred on this account that Massachusetts liked the Navigation Acts any the better. On the contrary, in 1700 the governor reported that at the council there was expressed

“great discontent at the Acts of Navigation, which restrained them from an open free trade to all parts of the world. . . . The London merchants had procured those restraining laws to be made on purpose to make the people of the plantations to go to market with them.”*

The issue of colonial freedom was only obscured by the more vital issue of the French advance against both colonies and mother-country. But though less active, it was not dead, and next year the home government could still declare that “the independency they thirst after is notorious.”†

From the period of the Revolution up to the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 there was, with a brief exception, a continual war with France. Throughout that long crisis the main energies of England were absorbed on the continent, under the directing genius first of William III. and then of the Duke of Marlborough. Correspondingly, it was the main object of Massachusetts, as representing New England, to obtain help from this country in the American war against French Canada. Notably in 1690, in 1692, in 1708, in 1709, and in 1710 she required our assistance against the

* Egerton, “A Short History of British Colonial Policy,” pp. 124-125.

† April, 1701, Board of Trade to Lord Bellomont, Governor of Massachusetts; O’Callaghan, vol. iv. p. 854, quoted Palfrey, vol. iv. p. 200.

common enemy, and the love of freedom necessarily receded into the background before the love of life. Let but the French danger be cleared from the horizon of America by the strong arm of England, and America would revolt.

This account of the establishment of our empire in America appears to correspond in every particular with the general principles stated in this book. First, it was not founded blindly, but after years of deliberation and the fullest thought. Next, its motive was political not commercial, the overwhelming necessity of checking the indefinite advance of Spain in that continent having become too evident. Thirdly, our colonists, as soon as the power of Spain receded and before that of France had become really threatening, showed the most ominous signs of independence, illustrating the law that it is pressure from without which is the fundamental bond of empire. Fourthly, as soon as the French danger filled their horizon, more loyal sentiments as to the necessity of union and imperial co-operation rose to the surface and held the field.

The next department of the empire which was now instituted was the West Indies—this also in the teeth of Spain. According to the phrase of the Spanish ambassador, for Spain to grant freedom of trade to Englishmen in that quarter was for Philip to give up one of his eyes.

It would be superfluous here to enter into the history of the West Indies, that island world stretched, like a twisted cord, between the point of Florida in North America and the delta of the river Orinoco to the south. A cord it is, of which the complex strands have been the property of as many nations. Or it

reminds the traveller of the soil of Delphi or of Olympia, where each slab underfoot is rich in old inscriptions of forgotten athletes and once famous victories. Each island is a palimpsest, scored and scored again with the writing of many contending authorities, until memory becomes too weak to decipher the hieroglyphic of history. But, details apart, our connection with it may be described in a sentence: the first English settlers arrived at St. Christopher's in 1623,* and since then our empire in that region has slowly expanded into six sets of colonies, the Bahamas, Jamaica and its dependencies, the Leeward Islands, Barbados, the Windward Islands, and Trinidad; or eight sets, if to the above be added our two possessions of British Honduras and British Guiana on the shores of the adjacent continent.

It is, however, desirable to point out how far our West Indian empire was built up by our government in the face of any antagonism from Europe, and how far that antagonism exercised a binding and unifying effect upon us and the colonists.

At this distance of time the striking feature in the foundation of our people in the West Indies is their extraordinary courage in daring to enter into the very cave and sanctuary of the Polyphemus of Spain. Sheer destruction stared them full in the face. When, in the preceding century, some hapless French Huguenots had presumed to fix their abode even so far off as Florida, Menendez had slaughtered them with all the cruelty of the inquisition, yet here were Englishmen far closer to the Spanish main, building a home in that network of islands possessed by Castile for

* Barbados was declared ours as early as 1605, but no settlers arrived till 1624.

four generations since its discovery by Columbus. An adventure comparable to that of Ulysses; and, indeed, the Spanish of those days were not so far different from those Cyclops of whom Homer wrote: "A froward and a lawless folk, who, trusting to the deathless gods, plant not aught with their hands neither do they plough; but, behold, all things spring for them in plenty, unsown and untilled."* Such had been the followers of Cortez and Pizarro, and such the breed was still, less fiery perhaps, but not less cruel than in the old days of Charles V. and Philip II.

Basing their claim to monopoly on international law, the Spaniards utterly denied our right so much as to appear in the West Indies. As a despatch from Jamaica, preserved in our Record Office, phrased it, "The Spaniards look on us as intruders and trespassers wheresoever they find us in the Indies, and use us accordingly . . . it must be force alone that can cut in sunder that unneighbourly maxim of their government to deny all access to strangers."† Hence when Englishmen, not content with obtaining access, positively settled themselves in the West Indies, Spain's anger was high indeed. The documents of that period are full of the accounts of conflicts between our colonists and the Spanish from the first moment that the latter realized our formidable aim. St. Christopher's, our first settlement, shared the honour with Nevis of being first destroyed: "the Spaniards took Nevis and St. Christopher's, and

* "Odyssey," Book IX. line 100, *et seq.*

† Dated Jamaica, August 21, 1666; from Governor Sir Thomas Modyford to Secretary Lord Arlington; "Calendar of State Papers—Colonial, 1661-1668," pp. 406-407.

burnt all the houses there ;”* and so through the seventeenth century the irregular but bloody conflict went on.

There were reasons for this strange survival of our West Indian stock. Those who assume our empire to have been raised haphazard will conjecture that our government had nothing to say to this movement of our people towards the West Indies, and that all was left to chance. There could be no error more complete. A statute of the Long Parliament † recites that—

“in the Islands of Barbados, Antigua, Saint Christopher's, Nevis, Montserrat, Bermudas, and divers other islands and places in America, there have been and are Colonies and Plantations which were planted at the cost, and settled by the people, and by the authority of this nation, which are and ought to be subordinate to, and dependent upon, England; and have, ever since the planting thereof, been, and ought to be, subject to such laws, orders, and regulations as are or shall be made by the Parliament of England.”

In fact, every step of settlement and occupation had been taken under the authority and on the responsibility of the home government. In a few years' time we were to wage a war with Spain expressly upon the subject of these West Indies, and to send an expedition which resulted in the annexation of Jamaica.

So far from such a dominion having been the issue of chance, our government, in 1670, in negotiating the Treaty of Madrid, was able, though only

* Dated November 5, 1629; from Sir W. Killigrew to Secretary Dorchester; “Calendar of State Papers—Colonial, 1661-1668,” p. 102.

† Dated October 3, 1650; Scobell's “Acts,” edition of 1658, a collection of Acts and Ordinances, p. 132.

for the first time after so many years, to wring from Spain a full recognition of our sovereign rights in the West Indies."*

There were, of course, contributory causes for the preservation of our people, though that does not affect the argument. Spain was soon to be in full decay. Wars without and rebellion within would achieve her ruin, and her once blazing orb was sinking steadily and irresistibly towards the west. The Thirty Years' War engaged her last vital energies in central Europe at the very time when she should have been sweeping us out of every corner of the archipelago from Florida to the Venezuelan shore. Then there was the final revolt of Portugal, and the final independence of the Netherlands, and the final triumph of her rival, France, inaugurated by Richelieu and consummated by Louis XIV. It is said that when, in 1665, the news came that even Portugal had broken up the last poor remnant of the once invincible Spanish infantry, Philip IV., whose marble features had never yet betrayed symptoms of his agony, cast himself on the ground, with the despairing exclamation, "God's will be done." His grandfather had used that language when they told him of the Armada. Let it serve as the epitaph of the greatness of Spain.

If one reason of our survival in that arena lay in the decadence of old Spain, a second reason is to be found in the weakness of Spanish America. During the first half of the sixteenth century, while England had stood listless and callous to the new world, Spaniards had conquered a huge territory in America,

* Article VII., Hertslet, "Collection of Treaties and Conventions," vol. ii. pp. 196-199.

six thousand miles long, from Fort Maullin in Chili to San Francisco in New California.* That marvellous achievement was the work of not much more than a handful of men; and Benzoni, writing in 1550, estimated that at that time the number of Spaniards in all the provinces of Spanish America did not exceed fifteen thousand.† Add to this that subsequent to that date the tide of immigration from the shores of old Spain ceased, and we shall safely conclude that, in the next century, when Englishmen began to plant their feet on the island outskirts of this stupendous dominion, they might often pass for many years unperceived and unmolested by the conquerors scattered far and wide along the Andes and the cordilleras and the unbounded pampas.

Further, as regards the archipelago itself, the Spaniards, intent on a wider field of prey, had scarcely settled at all on the smaller islands, so that on our arrival no definite and practical issue of war necessarily arose between us and any former occupants. For example, when we landed in Barbados, in the words of Edmund Burke, it was without "the least appearance of ever having been peopled, even by savages."‡ When Cromwell took Jamaica, even Jamaica was nearly a blank; "although the Spaniards had possessed the island a century and a half, not one-hundredth part of the plantable land was in cultivation when the English made themselves masters of it."§

* Cf. Helps, "The Spanish Conquest of America," vol. iv. pp. 402-403.

† "Historia Novi Orbis," lib. iii. c. 21. Benzoni, however, is a prejudiced observer.

‡ "European Settlements in America," part vi. chap. v.

§ Bryan Edwards, Book II. chap. ii.; quoted by Lucas, "West Indies," vol. ii. p. 94.

Besides the weakness of old Spain, the attenuated organization of Spanish America, and the emptiness of the island world scattered in the Caribbean Sea, there was a fourth reason for the survival of our colonists in that quarter. Other nations besides ourselves had sent forth their adventurers thither, and all these, genuine colonists and avowed buccaneers together, combined against the Spanish as against a common enemy of overwhelming strength. In this remote corner of the world, the methods of Drake and of Hawkins still flourished for a century after the days of Elizabeth, until at last it was the Spaniard who became the intruder, and stood trembling before the wild justice of revenge.

Such, therefore, were the causes which enabled our emigrants to maintain during the seventeenth century a precarious and risky existence under the shadow of the frowning volcano of Spain. Now and then it seemed extinct and dead; but sometimes, too, jets of fire leapt from its crater, and lava carried destruction down its flank into the peaceful industrial homes of the Englishmen below. Surely those Englishmen must of necessity look to England as the seat of the government which had authorized their establishment and could be their only refuge in the day of trouble.

It might be supposed, in these circumstances, that, in the seventeenth century at all events, the West Indies would follow tamely at the heel of England. By no means; not even the fear of Spain could stifle the irresistible tendency of Englishmen towards independence. Those colonies had been substantially recruited by men cast out by the alternate victories of kings and Parliaments at home, thus obtaining

liberty at the heavy price of exile. They would be free at all hazards, or at least they would push their freedom to the furthest point consistent with the preservation of their existence in this new resort on the dangerous edge of Spanish America.

The case of Barbados may be quoted as an example. In the middle of that century, even when the power of Spain was still to be feared, the governor complained that his people were ready to cut adrift from the mother-country, and to model "this little limb of the Commonwealth into a free state." On the news of the execution of Charles, they repudiated the authority of Parliament, and an Act had to be passed proscribing all trade with them, together with their fellow culprits in rebellion, Antigua and the Bermudas. In reply, they boldly issued a declaration of rights, asserting that it was wrong for such emigrants as they "to be subjected to the will and command of those that stay at home." In the final issue they had to be reduced by force of arms. Certainly the restored government of Charles II. did not requite their loyalty with much gratitude, for it promptly laid a tax upon their exports which was not removed till so late as the government of the first Reform Act, and caused their groans, as a pamphlet of 1689 described them, to be heard for some six generations. But they could not afford another rebellion, since France began to take the place of Spain as the evil genius threatening the life of the West Indies.

It was the hostile pressure, first of Spain, and then of France, or, more accurately, of France and Spain together, which bound the West Indies so straitly to the side of England. As the seventeenth century

ended and the eighteenth began, this new danger loomed ever more clearly before the eyes of those colonists. The author of a work published in 1702, and entitled, "Proposals for carrying on an effectual war in America against French and Spaniards," expressed an apprehension generally entertained when he declared that "we must expect in a short time to see the riches of the West Indies fall into the hands of those two nations, and they will exclude all others."*

The third great region into which Englishmen were now penetrating was India. Considerable misapprehension has been entertained as regards the rise of our Indian empire. On the one hand, those who believe it to have been acquired "blindly," or by an "accident," labour under a misconception. On the other, those who believe it to be due to a "commercial" cause, though nearer to the truth, are still inaccurate. The truth is that our merchants went there to do business and were averse to any thought of empire. Finding business impossible in face of hostile European forces who hoped to oust us altogether, we deliberately set to work to acquire sovereignty. This was the cause and root of our Indian empire. Trade became imperialism, but only under the hostile pressure of the European powers.

Our original determination to go to India was taken, by a significant circumstance, in the year after the Armada. It was Spain, or, more precisely, Portugal, then incorporated with Spain, who was in possession when we resolved to oust her from that monopoly, and who prepared to fight us forthwith. It is noticeable that in the memorial addressed at that

* "Harleian Miscellany," vol. i. p. 389.

date to the Crown by English merchants and containing an elaborate survey of the position of affairs in India, only the Portuguese are mentioned as the Europeans to be reckoned with in that quarter.* So, too, in a still more detailed report made by Fulke Greville to Sir Robert Cecil in 1600, respecting the places to which we might trade in the East Indies, it is Portugal alone, though Portugal meant Spain also, upon whose greatness and energy he descants.† Nevertheless, Portugal was not destined to prove a formidable rival for long, being already upon the downward path in India. Her glories had departed in the century and more since Vasco da Gama had reached Calicut by sea and initiated her dominion. And in a few years' time, after our advent into those waters, our agent in Madrid correctly informed our government that "they hazard losing the greatest part of what they hold in those countries, trade having infinitely decayed, and the kingdom of Portugal grown so extreme poor."‡

If any precise term can be assigned to our struggle with Portugal for a position in India, it may be said to date from 1591, when the first English squadron started for India, up to 1654, when Oliver Cromwell exacted from Portugal a recognition that the monopoly so long claimed by her in those waters was a thing of the past.

Yet the career of Portugal in India had been

* Memorial dated October, 1589; "Calendar of State Papers—East Indies, China, Japan, 1513-1616," No. 239, pp. 94-95.

† Ibid. No. 266, report dated March 10, 1600. With the Portuguese Greville couples the Spaniards, because since 1580 Spain had annexed Portugal. But the Spaniards ignored India.

‡ Despatch dated June 16, 1615, from Madrid; Sir John Digby to Secretary Windwood.

romantic and even glorious; the spirit of a crusade had given endurance and heroism to those rough pilgrims of the sea, and Camoens, the national poet, had truly interpreted their fervour when, in his epic of the *Lusiad*, he portrayed an Indian empire acquired by the Portuguese successors of St. Thomas for the faith of Christ.

Among the farthest islands of the Farthest East, I have seen in Timor the sad remnant of that stately dreamland; at Macao, on the China coast, have humbly saluted the shade of Camoens in the grotto which the piety of Portugal has consecrated with his bust; and in the golden Chersonese of the south, at Malacca, have viewed the gate which Albuquerque raised in 1510 to inaugurate his mission of founding an empire for Portugal. But dreams dissolve; Portugal bowed before the insistence of Cromwell,* and eventually gave the magnificent present of Bombay to England, on the condition that we should defend the Portuguese possessions in India against the predatory assaults of her new rivals, the Dutch.

So far, at least, one point in the argument is established beyond a doubt. Our original activity in India was accompanied at every stage with the full knowledge and approval of our statesmen, such, for instance, as Cecil and Cromwell. So far from any blindness or accident, our government deliberately procured from Portugal a treaty giving us full rights in that quarter.

On the other hand, it can be shown with equal clearness that the "empire" in India had not yet

* Cf. Dumont, "Corps Universel Diplomatique," edition 1728, vol. vi. part ii. p. 28. Treaty of Alliance between Cromwell and John IV., King of Portugal, at Westminster, July, 1654.

been established, for the very good reason that the East India Company, being men of business, did not want it. Like sensible merchants, they were there to make money and gain a livelihood, so that the assumption of all the expenses and responsibilities of government was the very last thought in their brains. Their purpose was the profitable interchange of their products, not the difficult and often ruinous administration of men. In a despatch to the East India Company, their English plenipotentiary formulated that principle with the utmost clearness—

“A war and traffic are incompatible. By my consent you shall in no way engage yourselves but at sea. It is the beggaring of the Portugal. He never profited by the Indies since he defended them. Observe this well. Let this be received as a rule that, if you will profit, seek it at sea and in a quiet trade. For, without controversy, it is an error to affect garrisons and land-wars in India.” *

This policy commended itself generally to the directors, and they earnestly laboured to carry it out. To administer Indian territory was obviously a most expensive and superfluous proceeding. As men of business, they wanted to receive a dividend, not to purchase a diadem.

Nevertheless, external forces were too strong for them, and they eventually embarked upon empire against their will. Very early they became aware of a tremendous tide of European ambitions setting in towards Hindostan. So potent did that current prove, that no less than three European powers, apart from

* Letter of Sir Thomas Roe to the East India Company, dated November 24, 1616; *cf.* Foster, “Embassy of Sir John Roe,” vol. ii. pp. 342-352.

ourselves, have aimed in turn at the dominion of India, in the following order of time: Portugal with Spain, Holland, and France. Portugal long preceded us, and Spain, on her behalf, in 1607, informed our ambassador that she could never be friendly with those who traded to the Indies.* Next, Cromwell, in 1652, and Charles II., in 1672, both declared the Dutch action in India to be so prejudicial and dangerous to us as to constitute a ground for declaring war against Holland. Thirdly, "even in 1700 the danger from French rivalry was dimly foreseen," a danger which culminated in the next century.† Finally, of Russia there is no need to speak. Thus hostile European energies were from the very first actively assailing us in the Peninsula, and it was this constant danger which forced our would-be traders to undertake unwillingly the burden of government, a burden too heavy for them, and of which they had finally to be relieved by Britain herself. Hence the Indian empire was organized by us in self-defence against the assault of our European rivals.

Any idea of peaceful trade, then, was destined to be rudely dispelled, for, unhappily, the Dutch were not prepared to permit our presence in Hindostan. As our Portuguese animosity began to decline in India, that original contest was promptly superseded by another struggle with the factors and the fleets of Holland. Although Holland had virtually driven us from the Spice Islands, she was not content until she should oust us from the less profitable Indian trade as well; and it was to no purpose that, modestly seceding from the Spice Archipelago, we fixed our headquarters

* "Calendar of State Papers—East Indies, 1513-1616," para. 371.

† Hunter, "History of British India," vol. ii. p. 371.

at Surat, near Bombay, with the hope of building a trade in that more sheltered region of the East.*

This was a move upon our part which for a time, at all events, appears to have disconcerted the Dutch; "we have no real power in these countries," and "the English get daily a firmer footing in India," was at first the melancholy report of the Dutch agents on the coast.†

This dismay upon the part of our rivals did not, however, last very long. England was entering upon her generation of internal discord and confusion; and this domestic weakness, reacting upon our external fortunes, spread some confusion over our Oriental policy. In the Peninsula the fortunes of our enemy appeared to make progress, so that when thirty years had passed after the despairing complaint of the Dutch agents, Pepys could note in his diary, though with exaggeration, that "the state of the Dutch in India is like to be in a little time without any control, for we are lost there;" and next month he could repeat that there is "great talk of the Dutch proclaiming themselves in India, Lords of the Southern Seas, and denying traffick there to all ships but their own."‡ Nor, as the century proceeded to its close, did the strength of Holland appear to many eyes to be declining in those waters; the Dutch held one hundred and seventy fortified stations in India at the close of the century,

* Bruce, "Annals of the East India Company," vol. i. p. 304. In 1630, Bantam, our post in Java, was declared subordinate to Surat.

† MS. Dutch records; letter from Surat dated April 30, 1634; and report and balance-sheet of the trade at Surat, June 20, 1634; given in Hunter, "History of British India," vol. ii. p. 64.

‡ "Pepys' Diary," Wheatley's edition of 1894, vol. iv. pp. 27 and 37, under dates of January, 1664, and February, 1664.

and Sir William Davenant, in an essay on the East Indian trade at that epoch, gravely contemplates and calculates the risk of our expulsion.* Wherever we had gone, whether we had founded our dominion and organized our resources at Bombay, at Madras, or at Calcutta, we had been obliged to fight the Dutch. Such was the requital reaped by us during the seventeenth century for the assistance which we had proffered to the Netherlands against Spain in former days; and Sir Thomas Roe, our first envoy to the court of the Mogul, with that thought in mind, roundly denounced the Hollanders as "unthankful drunkards that we have released from cheese and cabbage, or rather from a chain with bread and water." But Sir Thomas Roe always spoke with the vigour and pictorial effect of an Elizabethan.

Yet in real truth these alarms were not to be justified by the events of history. This Anglo-Dutch whirlwind in the Eastern seas was becoming local, and its action inconsistent with the mightier atmospheric forces of the world. A stupendous blast of far wider influence was already breathing upon the face of the waters; and in the last quarter of the seventeenth century that same enemy who had superseded our discords with other European nations in the West Indies and America now made her mighty presence felt in the East. Before her the strife of Dutch and English speedily and naturally abated. "From the beginning of the eighteenth century the grasp of the Dutch upon points along the Indian coast becomes gradually relaxed;" †

* Bruce, "Annals," vol. ii. p. 586, as to the number of Dutch stations.

† Sir Alfred Lyall, "British Dominion in India," p. 53.

they retired in peace to their Spice Archipelago and made friends with England. For in 1675 France had founded Pondicherry, and unless Dutch and English abandoned their internecine struggle, both might succumb to the novel ascendancy of Louis XIV.

The argument hitherto has been that, during the first part of the seventeenth century, our men of business in India were confronted with successive dangers from the Portuguese and the Dutch, but that neither of these was so serious as to make it imperative for us to secure ourselves against them by organizing a dominion of our own in that quarter. As late as 1681 the Court of Directors found it consistent with their established policy to write: "All war is so contrary to our constitution as well as our interest, that we cannot too often inculcate to you our aversion thereunto."* They did not want an empire.

It is startling, then, to find that, so shortly afterwards as 1687, a momentous change had already been realized, and that the reservations which had restricted our action in old days had been swept away by the sudden and overwhelming current of necessity. In the latter year the Court declared, in a spirit precisely opposite to that of a few years previous, that it is imperative to "establish such a polity of civil and military power . . . as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English Dominion in India for all time to come."† There was no "blindness" or "romantic adventure" here. The revolution in our Indian policy was complete. It had been necessitated by the plain symptoms of the weakness of

* Letter from Court to the Bombay Council, dated April 22, 1681.

† December 12, 1687.

the Moguls, and of their incapacity to maintain order in every corner of their dominions, and by the knowledge that if the Moguls could not govern, France would. Next year war with France began. That war was in reality to end only in 1763 with our establishment in India.

Such was the slow and encumbered rise of the empire of Britain. It was sown in weakness. Whether or not it would be raised in power, the torn surf of many an ocean, the red grass of many a battlefield would show.

CHAPTER V

THE GROWTH OF THE EMPIRE

IN the preceding pages the cause and character of the empire in the two centuries which followed the discovery of the new world have been described in some detail. At first, up to the middle of the sixteenth century, we were generally indifferent to any such enterprise. But next, in the reign of Elizabeth, it began to be clearly realized that a political organization must be constructed beyond the waters, if the power of Spain was to be resisted permanently. Nevertheless, during the queen's reign, the nation and the government only acted tentatively and spasmodically in that direction, so that failure awaited our efforts in every quarter. In the seventeenth century, however, the matter was definitely taken in hand, with the result that an empire was at length established on the shores and among the outlying islands of the continent of North America, in defiance of the arms and the authority of Spain. Simultaneously our men of business gained for themselves, with the consent and approval of our government, a foothold for trade in Hindostan. Here, too, Spain, or more accurately Portugal then incorporated with Spain, opposed us, and Holland, the offshoot of the Spanish empire, acted similarly. But in India no empire was founded as yet. Thus, in the period

of two centuries subsequent to the revelation of the new world, our imperial history may be summarized by a statement that our government had founded an empire across the Atlantic under the necessity of resistance to the Spanish power.

The present chapter carries the argument forward up to the date of the negotiation of the Peace of Paris in 1763. The central fact dominating the history of this period is the extraordinary energy with which France assailed us in the old world as well as in the new. She had seized the reins of power from the feeble hands of Spain, and the pressure which she now began to exercise upon our people in all parts of the world became all the more alarming in that from 1700 onwards she secured Spain as her ally. That alliance, with some breaches of continuity, lasted up to 1808, when the Spaniards rose against the oppression of Napoleon. A grave matter, indeed, when the two mighty antagonists, France and Spain, whose rivalry had distracted the world since the days of Columbus, became united in common hostility to England and her empire.

If the general argument of this book be correct, we shall expect to find that, under the pressure of this terrible assault upon our security, we felt it imperative to extend and consolidate the empire, so that the weight of our friends might outbalance the preponderance of our enemies in the world without. And thus it proved. Our empire across the Atlantic was enlarged by the conquest of Canada, an acquisition necessary for the preservation of our American colonists ; while in the East the French, who threatened our existence equally in that quarter, were ousted by force of arms from Hindostan. Soon

after, our government, finding the East India Company overburdened by the responsibilities of so vast a territory, began to treat India as a definite portion of the British empire, when by the Act of 1773 the charter of the East India Company was subverted, and the government of India passed in some degree under the jurisdiction of the crown.* Here, again, it was neither in a fit of blindness nor at the instigation of cupidity, but by the stress of sheer necessity, that the empire was built up.

Such a view of the politics of the eighteenth century may, indeed, be criticised on the ground that it is opposed to a common opinion. For example, the distinguished author of "The Expansion of England" gives an opposite account. According to him, the history of the eighteenth century was "a duel between England and France for the possession of the new world"; or, again, those two powers were "rival candidates for the possession of the new world"; or, again, "in America and in Asia, France and England stood in direct competition for a prize of absolutely incalculable value"; or, again, "the real bone of contention between England and France is the new world"; or, lastly, there raged between the two rivals "an eager competition for territory."† Hence, in the deliberate and often repeated opinion of that author, this country stands in the eighteenth century as a conqueror bent on rivalling France in the early appropriation of immense territories.

Driven by his own argument to consider us

* 13 Geo. III. ch. 63, 64; "Parliamentary History," xvii. pp. 928-929; "Annual Register," 1773, pp. 95-105.

† Sir John Seeley, "The Expansion of England," pp. 28, 29, 31, 32, 111.

as raiders on a large scale, Sir John Seeley gives up the defence of our morals altogether. "I do not make the smallest attempt . . . to justify the means adopted by our countrymen," he proceeds to say; "indeed, it is not easy to approve the conduct of those who built up Greater Britain." Finally, his conclusion is that, if the empire had any definite cause, which he appears to doubt, "we founded our empire, partly, it may be, out of an empty ambition of conquest, and partly out of a philanthropic desire to put an end to enormous evils."* Surely, this is a view that it is impossible to accept. There is no substantial evidence for the belief that ours was "an empty ambition of conquest" flavoured with philanthropy. No wonder that, holding such a doctrine, he should find the action of those who established the empire to be hard to defend.

According to the opposite argument of these pages, the action of those who constructed the empire is perfectly defensible, or rather is eminently justifiable. Our government and people so acted, not for the sake of the lucrative plunder of new countries, or out of "empty ambition" combined with a modicum of philanthropy, but because the very existence of this country and the safety of her civilization depended on resisting the policy of France, both in Europe and in the world oversea. It was not for loot, but for life, that we fought so well.

In order to prove this latter observation, it is necessary to show clearly, first, how formidable France really was, and continued to be, after the Peace of Utrecht in 1713; and, next, what a strenuous resistance we had imperatively to offer to her hopes in

* Sir John Seeley, "The Expansion of England," pp. 134 and 304.

the various quarters of the outer world. As the result of this necessity to resist her, the empire was immensely extended in the eighteenth century.

A master of modern history, in reviewing the character of King William III., has pointed out that, on the accession of that monarch in 1688—

“the most prominent question of the day, and that of the highest importance for the further development of mankind in Europe, was the rise of the French monarchy to an universal preponderance which threatened the independence of every country and every race.”*

Much more serious did that danger become when, at the very close of William's life, at the opening of the eighteenth century, France secured Spain as her friend and ally. This was the situation which henceforth confronted England, and which compelled her to make such vital exertions in the eighteenth century. It was with the sense of this danger upon him that Burke, many years after, using almost the language of terror, could stigmatize this combination of the Latin powers as “the most odious and formidable of all the conspiracies against the liberties of Europe that has ever been framed.”

Reckoning from the opening of the eighteenth century, the epoch up to the Peace of Paris in 1763 was distinguished by no less than five outbreaks of war. There was the prolonged struggle concluding with the Peace of Utrecht in 1713; another contest was begun by Spain in 1718 and practically ended in 1720; the third was that irregular outbreak of Spain against us which culminated in 1727 on the repulse

* Leopold von Ranke, “History of England, principally in the Seventeenth Century,” Book XXI. chap. x. p. 298, edition of 1875.

of the Spanish attack on Gibraltar; the fourth was the war which opened in 1739 and ended in 1748; and the fifth was the Seven Years' War. In all the most important of these wars—that is, in the first, fourth, and fifth—France and Spain were associated.

That France and Spain was able to find the necessary surplus energies for their attacks upon us during this period was owing to a particular circumstance, the political weakness of Central Europe. Central Europe being disorganized, France and Spain became correspondingly strong.

A dominating fact in the politics of the eighteenth century is the profound discord of Germany and the utter weakness of Italy. In past ages no power had ever yet been able to reduce those regions to one authority; the futile quarrels incidental to such efforts had induced a general prostration of all central rule, and where we now witness the concatenation of the three powerful states of Germany, Austria, and Italy, could then be seen only the incipient monarchies of the houses of Savoy and of Hohenzollern, together with that of the Hapsburgs, far more imposing than the others, but sadly embarrassed by an infinite complexity of discordant interests and overwhelming responsibilities.

This was a factor highly favourable for France and Spain; but there was another feature in the European politics of the eighteenth century which, though not viewed by French statesmen as satisfactory, also tended, for the present, to free their hands.

Since France was opposed to those powers of Central Europe who barred her expansion eastward, it was very natural that she should look for allies on the farther side of Europe, who might be relied on

or persuaded, to attack Austria in the rear, or, at any rate, might constantly distract her attention from the designs of France. In the eighteenth century three such powers existed, Sweden, Poland, and Turkey, but, unfortunately for France, all were in decay. The decline of Sweden became evident in 1721, when the Treaty of Nystadt displaced Sweden for ever from the position of the leading power of the north; that of Poland in 1733, on the occasion of the outbreak of the war of the Polish Succession; while Turkey, whose institutions had long been mined with corruption since the close of the sixteenth century, was exposed as visibly decadent by the conclusion of the Treaty of Kainardji in 1774. The enemy common to all these three was the new power of Russia: "Russia was working to sap the foundations of Sweden, Poland, and Turkey. She was striving to destroy the triple barrier which separated her from Europe."*

This weakness of the three powers on whom France relied in Eastern Europe would have constituted a serious weakness for France also, but for two circumstances, one of which arose immediately, and also for another more remote. The very weakness of the three powers of Sweden, Poland, and Turkey constantly distracted the attention of the statesmen of Central Europe from attention to the designs of France. Schemes of partition were rife; Prussia, Russia and Austria, with these prizes dangling before them, watched each other with the keenest jealousy throughout the eighteenth century; and when the French Revolution broke out the mighty expansive impulse of French military aggression,

* Jonquière, "Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman," p. 373.

which soon developed itself, found Europe so much at odds over Polish affairs that Europe, the plunderer of Poland, was plundered herself.

The other cause that contributed to recompense France for the debility of her three friends was the singular attraction which she exercised upon Russia, an attraction which has culminated in our own hour in the Dual Alliance. At the very opening of the era under survey Peter the Great occupied the throne, and in 1717 visited Paris with the purpose of urging a Franco-Russian alliance. "Sweden," he said, "is almost annihilated, and I, the Czar, come to offer to France that I should take Sweden's place." Four years later he preferred the same views with much insistency; and in 1740 "the conflict, partly military and partly diplomatic, which had existed for several years between the two nations, far from leaving behind it the germ of hatred, seemed to have prepared their reunion by inspiring them with sentiments of mutual esteem."* Hence, for this twofold reason, neither the decadence of Sweden, Poland, and Turkey, nor the simultaneous rise of Russia, though both changes were unpalatable, really affected France very seriously.

To establish the alarming nature of this French preponderance, there is, to begin with, the evidence of the judicious historian of the eighteenth century. "After the Peace of Utrecht," says Mr. Lecky, "the ascendancy of France in Europe, which had proved the source of many dangers, was not permanently impaired."† And somewhat later, with reference to

* Vandal, "Guerre de la Succession de Pologne et Guerre d'Orient;" Lavisse et Rambaud, "Histoire Générale," vol. vii. p. 158.

† Lecky, "History of England," vol. i. p. 124.

the decade of that century ending in 1740, the same authority remarks, "The greatest danger to England lay in the power of France, and that power for several generations had been rapidly increasing."* Another competent judge, Prince Bismarck, in his own way a profound student of political history, has pointed out, with reference to 1743, that "at that time every state in Europe was threatened in its liberty and existence by the universal monarchy which was then in course of development in France."† Such, too, was the view of contemporary authorities. Barbier wrote that "the French king is the master and arbiter of Europe;" Bolingbroke, that twenty years of tranquillity had sufficed "to re-establish France's affairs, and to enrich her again at the expense of all the nations of Europe;" Frederick the Great that "since the year 1672 the French kingdom has not been in a more brilliant situation."‡

Passing forward to 1748, the date of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, to so low a pitch have our fortunes fallen that Pitt described the peace just concluded as a happy event, not because it was satisfactory in itself, but because it was "absolutely necessary to our very being." Similarly, Pelham declared that the peace is "almost a miraculous delivery for this country."§ The Duke of Bedford intimated the same conviction: "the peace is brought about in such a manner as not to leave the superiority which the

* Lecky, "History of England," vol. i. p. 356.

† Busch, "Bismarck, some Secret Pages of his History," vol. iii. p. 179. Bismarck refers to Dettingen, which was fought in 1743.

‡ Barbier, "Journal Historique;" Bolingbroke, "Study of History," letter viii.; Frederick II., "Histoire de mon temps," vol. i. p. 37.

§ "Grenville Papers," Pitt to George Grenville, April, 1748; Pelham to same, April, 1748.

French have had over us in the field appear too glaringly in the treaty they have signed with us." * Walpole had said in former years that England was not a match for France and Spain in combination, and this forecast appeared to be in course of verification. True that we were stronger at sea, yet, on the other hand, our navy was generally paralyzed in part for lack of crews. The French ships were better designed, and larger class for class than the English, and, lastly, though we had captured 3400 vessels from France and Spain during the war recently ended, they had succeeded in capturing 3200 from us.†

As the years proceeded, our prospect, instead of improving, positively deteriorated in a manner which struck dismay into the hearts of our leading men. In 1755 the nation is "sinking by degrees." ‡ Next year Pitt writes, "I dread to hear from America. Asia, perhaps, may furnish its portion of ignominy and calamity to this degenerate, helpless country;" and he repeats a few days later that "distress, infinite distress, seems to hem us in on all quarters."§ Next year, again, in 1757, the same melancholy prevails; "we are undone" is the summary of Lord Chesterfield; Pitt declares at one time that "the French are masters to do what they please in America," and at another that, beside the burden of debt, "the heavier load of national dishonour threatens to sink us with

* "Correspondence of Duke of Bedford," vol. i. p. 565; Bedford to Sandwich, October 17, 1748.

† Mahan, "Influence of Sea-power on History," pp. 259, 260, and 280, for these three statements as to naval affairs.

‡ Dodington, "Diary," May, 1755.

§ "Grenville Papers," vol. i. pp. 165 and 168; Pitt to Grenville, June 5, 1756, and ditto to ditto, June 16, 1756.

a double weight of misfortune."* In fact, as the historian of our own day has observed, "nothing could be more deplorable than the condition of England, and the years 1756 and 1757 were among the most humiliating of her history." †

Although the next few years exhibited a complete reversal of fortune and rendered us dominant by 1763, enough has been said to establish the proposition that during the fifty years succeeding the Peace of Utrecht the pressure upon us continued in full, and imperatively necessitated the greatest exertions at home and abroad. The philosophic Hume, even at the very end of that period, described France as "the greatest force that perhaps ever was formed," as "formidable to the liberties of Europe," and as eager for "universal monarchy." ‡ It is necessary to trace that mighty influence in its effect on the world beyond the bounds of Europe, throughout the subsisting divisions of our empire in the West Indies, East Indies, and North America, in order to show that France was as dangerous to our people abroad as at home.

There can be no question but that during this period of history our West Indian colonies were threatened to a very serious extent, partly by Spain, our most ancient enemy in that quarter, and not less by France. Spain had from the first been powerful in this region, while towards the close of the seventeenth century France had acquired, in addition to her

* Chesterfield, "Miscellaneous Works," vol. iv. p. 198, July, 1757; "Grenville Papers," vol. i. p. 227; Pitt to Grenville, October 29, 1757.

† Lecky, "History of England," vol. ii. p. 452.

‡ Hume, "Essays," edition of 1764; Essay VII., Of the Balance of Power; vol. i. p. 372.

other possessions, St. Domingo, "the best and most fertile island in the West Indies, and perhaps in the world."* Besides this plantation, there were others scarcely inferior, so that during the eighteenth century bitter complaints arose that the French settlements had so rapidly increased that they rivalled or surpassed those of England.† Adam Smith considered that "in the good management of their slaves the French planters, I think it is generally allowed, are superior to the English;"‡ while Burke similarly declared that, "upon the whole, we have the greatest reason to be jealous of France in that part of the world."§

On her side, Spain threatened us also, and with more active measures. Already, in 1729, "the complaints of the merchants upon the interruption they met with everywhere in their trade, and particularly upon the depredations of the Spaniards in the West Indies, were loud and numerous."|| Eight years later the West India merchants petitioned the House of Commons that

"for many years past their ships have not only frequently been stopped and searched, but also forcibly and arbitrarily seized upon the high seas by Spanish ships . . . the remonstrances of his Majesty's ministers at Madrid receive no attention, and insults and plunder must soon destroy their trade."

* Burke, "European Settlements in America," vol. ii. part v. chap. ii. p. 14.

† Macpherson, "Annals of Commerce," vol. iii. pp. 262-263.

‡ Adam Smith, "Wealth of Nations," edition by J. R. MacCulloch, 5th edition of 1849, Book IV. chap. vii. part ii., p. 263.

§ "European Settlements in America," vol. ii. p. 23.

|| Lord Hervey, "Memoirs of the Reign of George II.," vol. i. p. 119; January, 1729.

Of our two enemies in that quarter, Spain was strongly or impregnably posted on the mainland, while in more immediate contiguity to our islands, "the French West Indies, from a condition which could excite no other sentiments than those of compassion, are risen to such a pitch as to be an object of great and just terror to her neighbours."* Our colonists lived under the threatening shadow of the Bourbon powers. Even so, there are many signs that the love of independence so innate in the breast of a colonial Englishman had its hold upon our West Indian countrymen. The same questions which agitated the American colonies found their feeble counterpart in the West Indies. But it was impossible for men thus situated to take a genuinely independent line. "The situation of the West Indies as the natural cockpit of the European nations in the struggle for hegemony, rendered it idle for these islands to hope to be independent of one or other of the great powers."† Here once more is illustrated the second proposition of this volume, that, if pressure from Europe has raised up the empire, it is this force also which maintains and moulds it.

The second region towards which our energies had been directed was India. In this region too, as in the West Indies, we were called upon to defend ourselves against the French.

It has already been pointed out that, in the early years of the eighteenth century, the Mogul power was falling rapidly into decay, and soon the strokes

* Burke, "European Settlements in America," dated 1761, vol. ii. p. 39.

† H. E. Egerton, "Short History of British Colonial Policy," pp. 166-167.

rained down from two quarters upon the hapless emperors of Delhi. During the first sixty years of that age, Afghanistan reopened her sluice-gates, and no less than five expeditions, led respectively by Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah, penetrated into Hindostan and disorganized the government.* Internally, that epoch was marked by the rise and progress of the Mahratta arms.

The native geographers of Hindostan were accustomed to divide southern India into five portions, and though they disagree profoundly as to the boundaries of these divisions, they are in accord in calling one of these Maharashtra. The inhabitants of this tract, the Mahrattas, lived more or less in concord with the Mohammedan conquerors of India for many ages, and, in consequence of their comparative humility, "were quite lost sight of, and so little attention was paid to them that in the seventeenth century, when they started up from their native hills and plains, they were to other nations a new and almost unknown race of people." † It was in 1657 that the Mahrattas first attacked the Moguls in force, and though the emperor contemptuously dismissed the Mahratta leader under the designation of "The mountain rat," ‡ yet these rats did indeed devour India, and by 1715 their power had attained to such formidable proportions as to eclipse the imperial authority itself. By 1740 they were plundering and burning on the east and on the west, from the Hooghly to the Bunass, and from Madras to Delhi, for their rule was rapine and arson. When at that date the Nizam asked for a picture of his

* Nadir Shah in 1738 ; Ahmed Shah in 1747, 1751, 1756, and 1759.

† Grant Duff, "History of Mahrattas," edition of 1826, vol. i. p. 44.

‡ Grant Duff, *op. cit.*, pp. 162 and 202.

rival Baji Rao, the Mahratta chief, the painter drew the latter as he found him, on horseback, dangling his charger's feeding-bag, holding the head-rope and heel-rope, and rubbing some ears of ripened grain in his hands. In the words which Sir Alfred Lyall, the poet of our own day, has put into the mouth of an old warrior, "they asked no leave of prince or chief, as they swept through Hindostan."

If such was their predominance by 1740, it still continued to increase, until in 1760 "the Mahratta dominion attained its greatest extent."* Writing about that time, the President and Council of Madras declared that "we look on the Morattoes to be more than a match for the whole empire, were no European force to interfere." †

The mortal collapse of the Mogul empire before Afghanistan from the north, and before the Mahrattas southward, gave scope to the organized power of France seated on the Indian seaboard. Undoubtedly, the French were extremely active and forward in the enterprise of empire. On the side of the English, "a rule was adopted not to permit any of the persons in the Company's service . . . to remove far into the inland country." ‡ On the other side the French, "who had failed for nearly eighty years in all their attempts to erect and support an East India Company, had succeeded in accomplishing this task about 1720." § But it was Dumas who, becoming their governor-general in 1735,

* Grant Duff, *op. cit.* ; vol. iii. p. 160.

† Despatch dated October, 1756, from the President and Council of Madras.

‡ Mill, "British India," vol. iii. p. 12.

§ Malcolm, "Political History of India," edition of 1826, vol. i. p. 28.

“was the first,” in the words of a French historian, “to make of our four political establishments places impregnable by the Hindoo arms, to treat as between independent powers with the potentates of the Peninsula, to introduce the French company into the feudal hierarchy of India, and to intervene in the wars between the princes.”*

If the French were to utilize the existing chaos to become dominant in India, they would next proceed to oust England. Inevitably a conflict was at hand, and in 1745 French and English first crossed swords on Indian soil in that struggle which was to last for eighteen years, until the former were driven from the field.

The period of eighteen years which covered the struggle of French and English in India falls naturally into two parts of nine years each. On the whole, the first part was coincident with the ascendancy of the French over the English, thanks mainly to the abilities of Dupleix. During that epoch the French displayed more versatility and organized vigour, and earned more prestige than ourselves. In 1754, the midway date which separates the two divisions of time, the governor of Madras wrote home that the French had a stronger military force, and “their influence with the country powers far exceeds ours.”† The brief-lived treaty arranged in that year maintained the French in possession of a much larger territory on the Coromandel coast than was awarded to the English, and their general was at Hyderabad in command of 5000

* Rambaud, “L’Indoustan, la lutte entre Francais et Anglais, 1718-1767;” Lavissee et Rambaud, “Histoire Générale,” vol. vii. p. 272.

† The governor of Madras, in transmitting to the London Board the provisional treaty made in 1754 with Godeheu, who in that year superseded Dupleix.

well-disciplined troops. But in that year Dupleix was recalled from India by the French, and the English began very shortly to gain ascendancy, so that in 1758 a high French official wrote, "Poor Frenchmen, where are we . . . without money, without a squadron, our troops mutinous, the nation's credit vanished, her reputation tottering . . . what can become of us?"* Correspondingly, Clive wrote to Pitt four months later, "I am confident, before the end of this the French will be near their last gasp in the Carnatic."† And so it happened. In 1761 we had broken the French power in India, an achievement ratified two years later by the terms of the Peace of Paris.

In these circumstances, a twofold course as regards India now opened up before our ministers. Either our government might leave India to the company, or, according to Chatham, the Crown was under the obligation to take over the sovereignty. With this object in view, he procured the appointment of a committee of the House of Commons,‡ and this was the first step towards that establishment of the empire in India which was inaugurated, though very tentatively, under the terms of the Act of 1773.

It will be instructive to pause at this point in order to inquire how far the history of our acquisition of an Indian empire squares with current theories upon the subject of our empire as a whole. Was this done "in a fit of blindness?" Surely nothing was more carefully or longer deliberated. India presently became a foremost topic in Parliament, and, in the

* Letter dated September, 1758, addressed to Conflans.

† Letter dated January, 1759, addressed to Pitt.

‡ Motion made by Beckford, November, 1766; *cf.* Fitzmaurice Life of Shelburne," vol. ii. p. 22.

year before the Act of 1773 was passed, engrossed the attention of all serious minds. Or was it acquired on a motive of greed and territorial rapacity? On the contrary, the men of business who up till that time had been chiefly responsible for Indian affairs only wanted dividends from the Indian trade, and were the last persons to desire to conquer India. They had no relish for these ruinous wars. That they were ruinous is proved by the fact that the company's debts were now six millions sterling, its army 30,000 men, and its annual subsidies to native princes one million sterling.* In August, 1772, the board had to tell the government that nothing short of a loan of at least one million sterling could save the company from ruin.

In contradistinction to such hypotheses, the genuine cause of the establishment of our sovereignty in India was that, during the first half of the eighteenth century and later, France appeared in overwhelming strength, and "the French colonies seriously threatened the English dominions in Hindostan."† They resolutely attacked us; we defended ourselves for very life; as the consequence of that successful resistance India fell into our hands; the company could not hold it or organize it unaided; the government undertook the obligation. Here was neither blindness nor rapacity. The Indian empire was a legitimate organization raised by us deliberately against the forward march of our European foe.

This chapter has hitherto been engaged in a demonstration of the serious nature of the pressure exercised upon us in the regions of the West Indies

* Adam Smith, "Wealth of Nations," Book V. chap. i. part 3; Annual Register," 1773, p. 65.

† Lecky, "History of the Eighteenth Century," vol. ii. p. 20.

and India. In the case of the third region, of North America, the same method of inquiry must be pursued. In this quarter Spain, who held Florida and Mexico, proved to be not wholly indifferent to our presence: "it was Spain which chiefly took umbrage at the progress of the English settlements and the English alliances in the south";* and as soon as the establishment of Georgia, in 1732, brought our colonists into close connection with the Spaniards, warlike operations were carried on with skill and daring along that disputed borderline. But the action of Spain during this period can be dismissed summarily in view of the infinitely more active antagonism of France. As in the West Indies, and in Hindostan, so here also France bade fair to oust us from the field.

Although the Peace of Utrecht had brought to a close a war very glorious in the annals of England, it left the relative positions of French and English in America still obscure. In one point, however, it was precise with an unfortunate precision. It unhappily provided that

"the island called Cape Breton, as also all others, both in the mouth of the river St. Lawrence, and in the gulph of the same name, shall hereafter belong of right to the French, and the most Christian King shall have all manner of liberty to fortify any place or places there." †

To yield this was to yield all. These were the portals of North America, and thus in 1720, the same year that saw the rise and reorganization of the French in India, men witnessed the fortification by the

* Bancroft, "History of the United States," vol. iii. p. 332.

† Article XIII., *ad finem*, of Treaty of Utrecht; Chalmers, "Collection of Treaties," vol. i. pp. 340-386.

French of the splendid fortress of Louisbourg, in Cape Breton, well deserving its name of the Dunkirk of America. In the words of a French writer of that time, the possession of Louisbourg made our rivals "at all times masters of the entrance to the river which leads to New France."* But if from Brest they could sail direct to Cape Breton and thence to the St. Lawrence, they could pass up that stream to the Great Lakes, from Ontario and Erie to the basins of the Ohio and the Mississippi, and thence again to Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico. Our colonies were cut off, and that war was inevitable which broke out eventually in 1744 and ended in 1748. In the course of the conflict we again took Cape Breton with its splendid stronghold, but again we gave it back. This was a signal success for France in America, and, thus emboldened, in the very next year after peace had been restored she claimed the valley of the Ohio. From that moment, in spite of a nominal peace, war smouldered in the backwoods between French and English.

In the long, involved, and half-hidden contest which now ensued, waged upon the rim and horizon of the wilderness, France maintained the upper hand. Our colonists were divided and quarrelsome; we were beaten from Fort Necessity; there was the defeat of General Braddock, and there was our repulse from Lake Ontario. By 1755 the French began to lord it over us; they had acquired the control of the Ohio valley, and matters went from bad to worse when, in the next year, we were driven from

* Wrong, "Louisbourg in 1745"; "Lettre d'un habitant de Louisbourg," p. 26; quoted by Lucas, "Historical Geography of the British Colonies," vol. v., Canada, part i. p. 191.

Fort Oswego. "Oswego is gone, the nation is in a ferment," wrote Horace Walpole.* Added to all, our old friends, the Five Nations of the Iroquois, were "in a very declining condition; about sixty years ago they had 10,000 fighting men; at this day they cannot raise upwards of 1500," and, what was more serious, "the whole confederation seems much more inclined to the French interest than ours."† Even Pitt was in despair. At the end of 1757 the English had been beaten at all points. They had failed to attack Louisbourg, they had been driven from Lake George, the country of the Five Nation Indians was nearly cut off, all hold on the rivers and the lakes was gone.‡ Horace Walpole declared that it was time for England to slip her cables and float away into some unknown ocean.

It would not serve the purposes of the argument to tell again the story of the conquest of Canada, which, by a dramatic reverse of the current of affairs, was won by the close of 1760, and confirmed to us three years later by the terms of the Peace of Paris. Simultaneously, Spain as well as France were dismissed from the scene, by an article which provided that "his Catholic Majesty cedes and guaranties, in full right, to his Britannic Majesty, Florida, . . . as well as all that Spain possesses on the continent of North America, to the east, or to the south-east, of the river Mississippi."§

* "Letters of Horace Walpole," vol. iii. pp. 41-42; under date of November 4, 1756.

† Burke, "European Settlements in America," vol. ii. p. 193; published in 1761.

‡ Lucas, *op. cit.* p. 268.

§ Article XX.; see "Select Charters illustrative of American History, 1606-1775," p. 266.

There is only one plain and obvious comment to be made upon this. Throughout all that period of the eighteenth century the power of France, with Spain at her heels, filled the horizon of our American colonists and threatened them with the fear of death or conquest. "It is almost certain, that, but for the new spirit which entered upon the scene with Pitt, France would have been, at least for the time, successful in the struggle with England for the dominion of America."* Precisely as in India, we resisted with desperate energy, and won at last, obtaining the cession of Canada and the valley of the Ohio under the terms of the Peace of Paris. This splendid addition to the empire was due neither to chance nor to a policy of rapine, but to our action under the commanding obligation of necessity.

But if we were thus so magnificently victorious in the West Indies, in Hindostan, and in North America, and if the pressure of France and Spain was thus for a season removed from before the eyes of our people abroad, then, in that case, the empire, thus relieved of the external force which ever binds it into unity, might be expected correspondingly to weaken or dissolve into its constituent elements. That melancholy catastrophe did indeed befall. In the East, our Anglo-Indians for a time almost defied England; in the West, across the Atlantic, the colonists, who had been saved, left the empire which had saved them.

* H. E. Egerton, "Short History of British Colonial Policy," p. 165.

CHAPTER VI

DISRUPTION AND RENEWAL

AT the close of the last chapter the subject had been carried as far as the year 1763. That chapter indicated how extraordinarily potent and widespread was the influence which France, the head of the Bourbon powers, continued to exercise upon all parts of the empire up to the Peace of Paris. Under that stress and pressure the empire held easily together, and there was little or no danger of any disruption from within. But no sooner had France and Spain been overthrown by Chatham, and no sooner had the external antagonism been withdrawn than the empire began to break up. In India it seemed as though our people dreamed of establishing themselves, after the manner of the Spanish in South America, in lordly independence of the wishes of the mother-country, now that the fear of France had been removed from before their eyes. Our American colonists went further, cutting themselves clean away, and thus the real nature of the empire of that day stood revealed.

However, the abeyance and prostration of our enemies lasted only a moment. The curtain had fallen upon their failure, but it was an interval, and no more. They recuperated soon enough, and after no long delay their best energies were exerted at our expense with renewed activity. This redevelopment

of the attack began soon after 1774, and culminated in the wars waged against us by revolutionary France, for the Revolution speedily reimbibed the militant energies of that ancient *régime* which men had vainly thought to abolish by the scaffold. And, next, the Revolution itself culminated in Napoleon, in face of whose all-powerful and all-pervading onslaught the British empire was consolidated afresh. This collapse of it, and this resurrection, from 1763 to 1815, is the theme of the present chapter.

Although in India the power of France had been conquered, substantial obstacles still encumbered our path. Chief of all were the Mahrattas, who were "nearly up to the end of the century at least a match for the English;"* while only less formidable were Hyder Ali, of Mysore, and his son and successor, Tippu Sahib, born intriguers with France against us. It was to the latter of these that Napoleon addressed his famous letter from Cairo, announcing "my desire of releasing you from the iron yoke of the English." Still, even taking these serious opponents into full account, it must be said that our road had become incomparably more easy, so that the final conquest and subjugation of India, so evidently necessary if French attacks upon us were to be repelled finally, were henceforth within the range of practical politics. Clive, writing in 1765, declared that "we have at last arrived at that critical period which I have long foreseen . . . it is scarcely hyperbole to say, to-morrow the whole Mogul empire is in our power."† Two years later the London

* Lyall, "British Dominion in India," second edition, p. 167.

† Clive to Rous, Chairman of Directors of East India Company, April 10, 1765.

Directors express the fear that if they pass certain bounds in Bombay and Bengal, "we shall be led from one acquisition to another." Finally, Dow, in his "History of Hindusthan," written in 1770, pointed out that ten thousand European infantry, acting together with the sepoy, "are not only sufficient to conquer all India, but, with proper policy, to maintain it for ages as an appendage to the British Crown . . . the thing seems not only practicable, but easy." Such were the confident hopes evoked generally by the elimination of the French; the Mahrattas and Hyder Ali might be formidable for the moment, but their subjugation was regarded as inevitable in the fulness of time.

In these circumstances, an epoch of almost Spanish cruelty and rapine seized temporarily on our people in Hindostan. Freed from the hostility of France, they cast off all authority, plunged into every species of license, accumulated vast fortunes, bade defiance to the Court of Directors as well as to the Home government, and appeared bent on carving out an India of their own. New Pizarros and new Cortes arose. The British administration was too weak and too confused in the early years of George III. to attend to the Indian omens, while, as regards the proprietors of the East India Company, there was equal chaos and incompetence: "one party gloried in the results of the military operations, another dreaded the wrath of the Great Mogul, a third was opposed to the policy of aggrandisement, and a fourth was eager to plunder those of their agents who had made large fortunes."* Against this welter of opinions and interests the fierce arrogance of the Anglo-Indians

* Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, "Life of Lord Clive," p. 143.

of that time made easy headway, so that the period of Indian history for the five years, 1760-5, is "perhaps the most shameful in its whole annals."* These crimes, it should be noted, were committed, not by those who built the empire, but by those who would destroy it.

It was in these circumstances that in 1765 Clive returned to India on a special mission for the purpose of repressing these alarming disorders, and what he found there illustrates in the clearest manner the accuracy of the above account. Every one traded, from the governor to the junior clerk, for his own profit; the civil servants acquired a monopoly of the internal trade, and amassed large fortunes, while the directors at home found their dividends dwindling and the company verging towards bankruptcy. Clive wrote of the Indian administration as "corrupt, headstrong, and lost to all principle."† "Every inferior," he added in a despatch, "seems to have grasped at wealth," and affairs were "nearly desperate."‡ Rebellion was rife: he discovered among the civilians all manner of "associations destructive of that subordination without which no government can stand"; while the officers actually organized a mutiny which constituted, in Clive's words, "an end of authority in the East India Company over all their servants." Before the task of cleaning this Augean stable, as he himself termed it, could be accomplished, Clive retired from India, broken in health, at the opening of 1767, so that chaos and corruption could renew their unclean reign.

* Lecky, "History of England," vol. ii. p. 473.

† Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, "Life of Clive," p. 158.

‡ Clive to the Directors, despatch dated September 20, 1765.

It was from this time forth, however, that the minds of English statesmen began gradually to be impressed with the thought that, unless we exerted ourselves, India would pass from our control. Nor did the rise of Warren Hastings in India do much or anything to lessen that serious concern. In 1782, for instance, the House of Commons could censure Hastings for having "brought great calamities upon India" without the smallest practical effect; for, though the Court of Directors thereupon ordered his recall, the Court of Proprietors deliberately negated that resolution, and Hastings remained in power. Something had to be done beyond the somewhat inconclusive Act of 1773, and accordingly, in the year subsequent to the failure of the House of Commons to deal with Hastings, Fox introduced his East India Bill.

It is extremely instructive and apposite to study the sentiments expressed upon India at that date in the House of Commons. They indicate most strongly the alarm so widely entertained at the possibility or probability of India's independence of the Home government. Fox, the framer of the bill, said—

"The company's government in India is a government of anarchy and confusion . . . the directors transmitted to Mr. Hastings the most positive orders. . . . Mr. Hastings thought proper to disobey them . . . the Acts of the British legislature were held in the most supreme contempt in Bengal . . . the servants of the East India Company held the Act of the British Parliament in sovereign contempt."*

Burke, during the course of the same debates, pointed out that with a few intervals "the British

* Fox, "Speeches," edition of 1815, vol. ii. pp. 199 and 210.

dominion extends from the mountains that separate India from Tartary to Cape Comorin . . . throughout all that vast extent of country there is not a man who eats a mouthful of rice but by permission of the East India Company." * Under the despotism of our unbridled officials the cries of India, he said, were given to seas and winds to be blown about in every breaking up of the monsoon over a remote and unhearing ocean. Our civilians, he said also, "drink the intoxicating draught of authority and dominion;" Hastings "maintains the most despotic power ever known in India . . . the servants of the East India Company triumph, and the representatives of the people of Great Britain are defeated." † All this was a little extravagant and rhetorical. Or, at any rate, it was in one respect a trifle antiquated, and applied to a past which was becoming old. For already the time had arrived when, in 1777, France had despatched an agent to propose an alliance with the Mahrattas, and already Hastings had received secret information from the British embassy at Paris that the French were concerting a scheme for an expedition to India in support of our native enemies in that quarter. It was absurd for Anglo-Indians to mutiny against the mother-country if France was now once more in the field.

Nevertheless, when Fox's bill was defeated and Pitt succeeded to office, he too felt it incumbent upon him to deal with Indian affairs. In defending his bill in 1784, Pitt referred also to "the extreme difficulty of governing India from home:" he laid it down that

* Burke, "Works and Correspondence," vol. iii. pp. 455-456. Speech of December 1, 1783.

† Ibid., pp. 468, 497, 502-503.

the government must be "so constituted as to secure obedience to the system of measures dictated from home;" and he added that "the first and principal object of the bill would be to take care to prevent the government from being ambitious and bent on conquest." * Such were the feelings of genuine apprehension which still, in 1784, could animate the breasts of English statesmen in regard to their power over their countrymen in Hindostan.

The last echo of these anxieties was to be heard in 1788, on the occasion of Burke's impeachment of Warren Hastings. In the composition of that high-wrought and inflammatory indictment it appears as though fear of the arch-criminal were often the principal ingredient and the guiding thought. Burke hates so much because he fears so much.

"We have not brought before you an obscure offender . . . we have brought before you the chief of the tribe, the head of the whole body of Eastern offenders; a captain-general of iniquity, under whom all the fraud, all the peculation, all the tyranny in India, are embodied, disciplined, arrayed, and paid. . . . You strike at the whole corps if you strike at the head." †

Such language might have been reasonable in 1768, or even in 1778. In 1788 all this had become inappropriate and unjustified. France had renewed her pressure upon us for ten years past, and our people in India had been recovering their equilibrium accordingly, and adjusting their ambitions to a more moderate scale.

* Pitt, "Speeches," vol. i. pp. 121, 122, 128. Speech of July 6, 1784.

† Burke, "Works and Correspondence," vol. vii. p. 285; "Impeachment of Warren Hastings," third day.

It has been shown, then, that as soon as the pressure of external danger was relaxed from the structure of the empire, in one main portion of it, in India, the signs of dissolution instantaneously appeared. But to this it may be replied that such a relaxation should have been more general in its consequences, and that our empire on the other side of the world, in America, should have experienced a similar tendency to collapse. The answer is that this is precisely what happened. Instead of nearly breaking up, as in India, it broke up altogether.

It had long been foreseen by unprejudiced European observers that our empire only existed in virtue of the antagonism of France to all its parts, and that it would disappear with the withdrawal of that antagonism. Kalm, a traveller who had personally studied the situation, wrote in 1748, "These dangerous neighbours, the French, are the reason why the love of these colonies for their metropolis does not utterly decline."* Argenson, the French minister, said the same. So said Vergennes, the French ambassador at Constantinople, and afterwards prime minister—

"England will soon repent of having removed in France the only check which could keep her colonies in awe. They stand no longer in need of her protection. She will call on them to contribute towards the burdens they have helped to bring on her, and they will answer by striking off all dependence."

This point is so important that such quotations should be multiplied. Montesquieu, in his "Notes upon England," written in 1730, similarly prophesied that England would be the first nation to be deserted

* Cf. Bancroft, "History of United States," vol. iii. pp. 464-465.

by her colonies. William Burke, a kinsman of Edmund Burke, in an anonymous reply to Lord Bath, argued boldly that we ought not to take Canada from France, and should allow France to remain in that region of America, so as to preserve some control over our colonies to the south. "If the people of our colonies find no check from Canada, they will extend themselves almost without bounds," and will revolt. "The possession of Canada, far from being necessary to our safety, may in its consequences be even dangerous . . . we ought not to desire it. There is a balance of power in America as well as in Europe." *

Similarly, among the miscellaneous works of Oliver Goldsmith, there is one entitled, "Preface and Introduction to the History of the Seven Years' War." In the course of his observations the author shrewdly enunciates the doctrine that "the French possessions in America should be restored; as they serve to prevent our colonies from forgetting their dependence." †

Montcalm, the hero of Quebec, wrote in 1757 that "England will be the first victim of her colonies." Still more remarkably he wrote just before his death: "I console myself that the loss of Canada, this defeat, will one day be of more service to my country than a victory, and that the conqueror in aggrandizing himself will even find a tomb there." ‡

Turgot, the eminent statesman and economist, had an equally prophetic conception of the British empire. Most people remember his well-known phrase, that

* "Remarks on the Letter addressed to Two Great Men," pp 30, 31.

† Goldsmith, "Works," vol. iii. p. 370; chap. ii., "Of France."

‡ Historical Manuscripts Commission, Dartmouth Correspondence, quoted by H. E. Egerton, "Short History of Colonial Policy," pp. 177-178.

“colonies are like fruits which cling to the tree only till they ripen ;” but probably few recall the sentence which immediately follows, “As soon as America can take care of herself, she will do what Carthage did.”* This was uttered in 1750. Here, then, are no less than eight persons, most of them of the highest intellectual eminence, who all perceived the future clearly and definitely forecast it. The maintenance of the British empire, they understood perfectly, depended on the continued presence of the French in America.

It is, in a sense, true that America only revolted because we tried to tax her. But in respect to this it must be pointed out that we had been taxing her throughout her history and imposing the most serious restrictions. Since the Revolution of 1688 the commercial classes, who then rose to power in England, had pursued a more restrictive system than before, and in 1719 the House of Commons had resolved that “the erecting of manufactories in the Colonies tends to lessen their dependence upon Great Britain.” To go back still earlier to the passage of the Navigation Act, as Burke described it—

“the Act of Navigation, the corner-stone of the policy of this country with regard to its colonies, was the system of a monopoly. . . . This principle of commercial monopoly runs through no less than twenty-nine Acts of Parliament, from the year 1660 to the unfortunate period of 1764.”†

Such had been the system pursued throughout. America would not now have quitted the empire, had

* Turgot, “Oeuvres,” vol. ii. p. 602 ; Second Discours as Prieur de Sorbonne, “ce que fera un jour Amerique.”

† Burke, Speech on American Taxation, 1774.

she not found her inducement and opportunity in the abeyance of France.

But it may be said that the action of the British government was now so monstrous and iniquitous that, France or no France, America would not have endured it. This, however, can scarcely be maintained. England, not yet a great manufacturing country, was staggering under a load of 140 millions of debt contracted in defence of the empire. She asked, or perhaps insisted, that America should contribute about one-third of the military expenses of her own future defence, while she herself bore the whole burden of the debt accumulated in the past, and also all the present and future charges in respect of the navy. "There is not," says the most judicious of English historians, "a fragment of evidence that any English statesman or any class of the English people desired to raise anything by direct taxation from the colonies for purposes that were purely English."* Or again, Adam Smith, in the "Wealth of Nations," published in 1776, points out that "the English colonies have never yet contributed anything towards the defence of the mother country." He adds that "the military force of the European colonies of America has never yet been sufficient for their own defence;" and further, that "Great Britain has hitherto suffered her subject and subordinate provinces to disburden themselves upon her of almost this whole expense of defence."† We were perhaps foolish in asking for a contribution, and America may have been justified in refusing it. But assuredly the

* Lecky, "History of England," vol. iii. p. 313.

† Adam Smith, "Wealth of Nations," edited by J. R. McCulloch, 5th edition of 1849, Book IV. chap. vii. part. ii. pp. 257, 266, 280.

demand was not in itself so irrational as to have done more than precipitate the disruption which a deeper cause had already prepared. In simpler terms, the Americans at heart desired independence; independence they could not have, until France was removed; France being removed, they seized the first opportunity afforded. No doubt we were ill-advised in affording them that opportunity. To summarize the argument, the action of Grenville and Townshend and the rest may have afforded a plea for opposition upon the part of the colonists, but it certainly was not adequate to explain the establishment of a separate commonwealth. The real cause of the American Revolution was that the innate desire for independence among the colonists of North America was no longer counteracted by the knowledge that France was on their flank in Canada. There was no particular dislike of England among the masses of the American population, and all the events of the war prove this to have been the case. Active sentiments were confined to a small body of ambitious and not very scrupulous men, and the prevailing feeling was confined to the belief that the time had come when America might fairly be left to stand independent, since she was strong enough to do so.

Thus the empire had been broken. By what agency was it to be renewed?

Before dealing, however, with that subject in detail, there is a general observation to be made. A return to active measures upon the part of our opponents began immediately upon the death of the old French king, Louis XV., in 1774, and the accession of Louis XVI. with a more active ministry.

From that date an energetic spirit began to animate that monarchy, and war finally resulted in 1778. In the succeeding year Spain ranged herself in the company of France; and next, in 1780, a whole cohort of nations gathered against us, under the name of the League of the Armed Neutrality. That was the darkest hour that we have ever known: a broken empire and a Europe united against us. The crisis stamped itself deep upon the memory of our people in every quarter of the globe, and though we escaped for the time by the conclusion of peace in 1783, the lesson was not forgotten. Henceforth every individual in the British empire, so far as it still remained intact, must have known that danger threatened him. It was, then, under the influence of such apprehensions as these that the imperial structure was rebuilt and fortified and even extended against the evil days which wise men could feel to be inevitable, and which, indeed, recommenced to present their portentous omens with scarcely an intermission from 1793 up to 1815. To proceed through the different parts of the empire, Canada felt that pressure from without in full force.

The colony of Canada, at this its period of initiation, presented one of the most singular phenomena in the world. It consisted of 60,000 Frenchmen and of a mere handful of British subjects. If any one could have foreseen that during some forty years, with a certain interval, England and France were to be at deadly odds, that individual would most inevitably have prophesied that French Canada would certainly seize one of her many opportunities to revolt, and would range herself, if not as an independent people, at least under the banner of her

ancient mother, France. Why was it not to be so? Why did French Canada remain a loyal portion of the empire?

It has been frequently observed in these pages that throughout history those who have enjoyed the blessings of British civilization have had constantly to stand together in order to preserve it, and that in virtue of this necessity the empire has been maintained. Such a necessity presented itself during this prolonged crisis to the mind of the French of Canada. Although of an alien race and character, they at once began, on the occasion of their entry into the empire, to enjoy the privileges of our institutions. They had never known freedom before. Bad government had fixed its talons upon their body politic. Corruption had riddled them. Despotism had frozen the genial current of their French patriotism. They had been chastised with whips and with scorpions. And now suddenly the long winter of war had vanished, and the old masters had been exchanged for new. Coincident with that metamorphosis, honesty had showed its face in the high places of government; a Bigot and a Varin, laden with the ill-gotten gains of their burglary, had fled from before this new daystar; in their stead, a General Murray or a Sir Guy Carleton were at work, changing the face of their existence by the practice of honour and truth. To their amazement and stupor, their hallowed religion, dearer to them than kin and country, was guaranteed to them for ever, in its most unrestricted exercise and with all its rights and privileges, by that British government of whose bigotry and intolerance the Americans across the frontier were ever prating to them with all the epithets of hyperbole.

No doubt they might have been equally happy, or even more happy, if they could have stood alone and independent. But this was utterly impossible, owing to the overwhelming political forces which closed them in on every side. If they had elected to stand as a nation, and if England had assented to relinquish them, they would have been immediately involved in one of two disasters. France would have reconquered them, and would have readjusted upon their necks the galling yoke of her misgovernment. But they were weary of this burdensome connection already; and besides, in a few years' time, they noticed, to the dismay of their Catholic and devout hearts, the monstrous and hateful growth of atheism and anarchy in the French Revolution. Like the Girondins, they recoiled with horror from that river of blood. It was that which cut them off from the hearth of their ancient communion more thoroughly than the blue Atlantic, with its three thousand miles of restless waters, had divided them before.

The domination of a France which they hated would thus have been the first result of their repudiation of the British empire. Or, in the alternative, an almost equally obnoxious fate would have befallen them. They would have descended into the hands of the newly established American republic, and their religion would have lost its privileges now guaranteed by ourselves. This is no mere speculation, for one of the counts against England advanced by the American Revolutionists was that we had tolerated Catholicism in Canada, and accordingly the French Canadians knew what to expect, should they become a booty for the United States. They were not so simple as to march with flying colours into the

camp of their religious enemies. From 1775 to 1783 they stood out against the invasions of the United States Republicans, and under the guidance of our soldiers repelled the assault.

But though the Americans failed signally on this occasion, they were resolved not to abandon the game. Thirty years passed, and at length their opportunity recurred when the power of England bent and well-nigh broke under the weight of Napoleon. The United States saw that, England being almost overpowered in Europe, the day had come to seize Canada. In 1811, says the American historian of that epoch, "the conquest of Canada became the favourite topic of newspaper discussion."* England seemed to be on her knees. In the debates of Congress one may find such opinions as these: "I shall never die contented until I see Great Britain's expulsion from North America, and her territories incorporated with the United States." Or, again, there was the phrase of Randolph, who declared that Congress "heard but one word—like the whip-poor-will, but one monotonous undertone—Canada, Canada, Canada."† "I believe," said Calhoun, "that in four weeks from the time that a declaration of war is heard on our frontier the whole of Upper and a part of Lower Canada will be in our possession." When the invasion began in 1812, the American general, Hull, issued a bombastic proclamation. "You will be emancipated from tyranny and oppression," it ran, "and restored to the dignified station of freemen." But Hull and his force

* Henry Adams, "History of the United States, 1809-13," vol. vi. p. 118.

† Ibid., pp. 143-145.

were promptly captured, and Canada held out as she had done in former days. Assuredly, she will ever keep in grateful and honourable remembrance the names of Brock and Tecumseh, of Morrison and Salaberry, of McDonnell and Fitzgibbon and Drummond, and of many another who saved her by many a memorable feat of arms. I cannot forget the sight of that monument erected by Canada to the memory of the first of these her defenders. On the right, far down in the valley, ran the rapids beneath the falls of Niagara. Beyond them, America began. As the eye passed from nation to nation of the Anglo-Saxon stock, nature herself seemed to have prescribed their union in virtue of the gifts of harvest and of orchard which she lavished with all her bounty and all her indifference upon both. But history has estranged what nature has sought to unify, and the passions of men have set their veto on the harmony of field and flood.

But there was soon to be added, more particularly in the years 1783 and 1784, another element of population of the highest importance to the stability of the British empire in Canada; that is, the United Empire Loyalists, who by 1786 already numbered upwards of 50,000, and so counterbalanced the number of the French. They settled on each side of the latter, some in the maritime provinces eastward, and some to the west in the province of Ontario, or Upper Canada. Naturally enough, these devoted adherents of the British connection, who had sacrificed all for their loyalty, felt an intense antagonism to the republic which had ejected them.

“For years they and their children were animated by a feeling of bitter animosity against the United

States, the effects of which could be traced in later times when questions of difference arose between England and her former colonies. They have proved with the French Canadians a barrier to the growth of any annexation party, and as powerful an influence in national and social life as the Puritan element itself in the eastern and western states." *

Theirs was an honourable history, and it would be hard to point to a state built on a foundation more goodly than that of Canada. The story of her origin illustrates in a marked degree the theme of these pages. Our empire in Canada was created and maintained by the antagonism of the French Canadians to the religious policy, and by the antagonism of the United Empire Loyalists to the civil policy, of the revolutionary Americans.

Descending southwards to the next portion of the British empire, the West Indies from 1778 up to 1815 were exposed, perhaps more than any other portion of our dominions, to the onslaught of our enemies. And no wonder, since "during the French Revolution about one-fourth of the total amount of British commerce, both export and import, was done with them." †

It is quite true that as the revolutionary struggle progressed the naval ascendancy of Britain progressed also, until at Trafalgar, in 1805, she swept her opponents from the open sea. But, in spite of that dominating position of ours, France thenceforth resorted to privateering in the West Indies, more especially from her island base at Guadaloupe, which she retained until 1810. Thus during the entire length

* Sir John Bourinot, "Canada," p. 292.

† Mahan, "The Influence of Sea-power upon the French Revolution and Empire," vol. i. p. 109.

of the warfare the West Indies were never free from attack.

Taking the whole period from 1778 to 1815, it is even amusing to recall the infinite revolutions of fate and fortune which attended some of our West Indian islands during that epoch. There was Dominica taken from us by France in 1778, regained by us in 1783, attacked by France in 1795, and partly taken in 1805, but immediately recovered. Or there was St. Lucia, a French island, captured by us in 1778, assaulted by France in 1781 and restored to her in 1783, retaken by Jervis in 1794, recovered by France in 1795, retaken by us in 1797, restored to France in 1802, and finally retaken by us in 1803. Thus was it that in 1814 St. Lucia, "the capital of the Antilles and the Gibraltar of the Gulf of Mexico," as a French governor described it to Napoleon, was finally deposited in the hands of Britain. Evidently, the West Indians, so far from being able to indulge in any dream of independence, could not call their lives their own throughout the cataclysms that were continually breaking over their devoted heads.

Descending far southwards to the third division of the British empire, the history of our acquisition of South Africa during the period now in question illustrates with equal clearness the subject in view. It has been pointed out already that the revival of our enemies in the years immediately subsequent to 1774 necessitated a revival of imperialism, and accordingly it is remarkably apposite to find that, in 1781, the British government, after its generations of inattention to South Africa, fitted out an expedition to seize that post.

The real reason that had induced us so long to

neglect this halfway house to India, and to confine ourselves to St. Helena, was a singular one. So early as 1620 a couple of our captains had formally annexed it to the British Crown; but, instead of endorsing their action, we had let it remain in the hands of the Dutch, our main reason being that from 1674 to 1780 the Dutch were continuously our friends. But now, towards the close of the eighteenth century, a melancholy change was in progress; Holland was descending steadily in the scale of strength, and, in proportion as she declined, was tending to unite her fortunes with her gigantic neighbour France. We had suddenly gained an empire in India; it was impossible to tolerate the presence of a power, nominally Dutch but really French, at the Cape of Good Hope, which could easily cut our communications with the East. Accordingly, this was the simple and sufficient reason which induced us, even in so gloomy a year as 1781, to despatch an expedition to seize this valuable station from Holland, who was now allied with France in the war against us. "France was scarcely less interested in the preservation of the Cape of Good Hope than Holland."* The attempt failed, but at any rate it is highly significant of the manner in which the new pressure exercised upon us by our enemies was spurring us forward to the recreation of the empire.

What proved a failure in 1781 proved a success in 1795. At that date Holland had been actually absorbed by France, and had been rechristened as the Batavian Republic. Cape Colony was a ruin, thanks to the utter incompetence of its government, and thus would at any moment have fallen a prey

* "Annual Register for 1782," pp. 106.

to the unbounded energies of the French Republic. We occupied and, with a brief interval, retained it until 1814, when we bought it for £6,000,000 from Holland.

In the delightful letters of Lady Anne Barnard, addressed from Cape Colony in the closing years of the eighteenth century to Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, may be traced without effort the position of affairs at the opening scene of our occupation. The sullen Dutch, the haughty English, both ever on the watch for the hour of France's retaliation, live again in that correspondence. There is even a prophecy that, should we attempt to retain South Africa, it will prove a second America.* How many times did I not hear that prophecy reiterated in September, 1899, on the eve of the war in South Africa, by the young bloods of the Pretoria Club!

The reason for our retention of the Cape was that otherwise France would inevitably have seized it, as she tried to do in 1803. In that year Napoleon issued orders to that effect, which were again forestalled by our ministry.† Thus our acquisition of South Africa was induced by the hostility of France, and was made for motives of well-considered and rational policy.

The fourth division of the empire, to which the Cape was at present only the adit and introduction, was India. It has been shown earlier that, on the eviction of France from the Peninsula, a sudden demoralization pervaded our people in that quarter

* Lady Anne Barnard, "South Africa a Century Ago," p. 54.

† Cf. Instructions issued by the First Consul to Général Decaen, 11 nivôse, an xi., *i.e.* January 1, 1803; Dumas, 'Précis des Evénements Militaires,' vol. xi. p. 185-190.

of the world, accompanied by every symptom of rapacity and disorder. Even mutiny and rebellion lifted their dreadful visage against the authority of England. This chaos, however, did not last for long, since India herself, like Canada and the West Indies and Cape Colony, began presently to experience the renewed pressure of France, and discarded the brief orgie of disaffection. In India that revival of danger from without was first felt in 1777, for it was in that year that the French agent reached Madras in order to stir up mischief against us, and it was in the same year that Warren Hastings received secret information from the British embassy at Paris that the French were concerting a scheme for an expedition to India in support of any natives who would become our enemies. Let us trace through Indian politics up to 1815 this sudden influence of French antagonism which constantly drove our statesmen, by way of retaliation, to extend our Indian dominion and to strengthen our frontier until it should become impregnable. For, in the words of Sir Alfred Lyall, "each repeated demonstration of France against England has accelerated, instead of retarding, its expansion."* In fact, the case of India bears emphatic witness to the view that it is pressure from without which has constituted the driving force of empire.

In 1778 the Chevalier de St. Lubin, the French envoy, arrived at Poona, the capital of the Mahrattas, who constituted our most formidable enemies in India. Of the latter power our representative complained

* Lyall, "British Dominion in India," 2nd edition, p. 174. The exception is the war 1778-1783, when we were so hard pressed as to do no more than to hold our ground in India.

that "in every respect they paid the greatest attention to the French." St. Lubin delivered his credentials, "being letters from the King and Ministers of France," and expressed his desire to establish a factory and a military force at Poona, and to obtain a seaport near Bombay. The Bombay government reported hereupon that

"if time is given to the French . . . we can expect nothing but a repetition of the scene of wars and intrigues formerly acted on the coast of Coromandel, which will certainly be fatal to the influence of the English on this coast, and may end in our total subversion."*

The influence of France was reviving every hour, and that influence soon made itself palpable on the field of battle.

The war that broke out in 1778 between France and England extended, of course, to India. In the struggle that ensued the French did not play the leading part on land, but aided and abetted our native rivals. On land they fought hand in glove against us in the company of our most formidable opponents, the Mahrattas, in Central India, and Hyder Ali, of Mysore, in the south. They swarmed in those native armies, and "throughout the struggles of Hyder Ali with the English the French were found in numbers in his army, and gallantly assisting him in his various enterprises."†

Hence it came about that, so far from the French having been finally ousted from India, they had now

* "Bombay State Papers," Mahratta series, pp. 291 and 296; Forrest, "The Administration of Warren Hastings, 1772-1785," pp. 146-147.

† Bowring, "Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan," p. 107.

returned in tremendous force, and so much was this the case that "by the summer of 1780 the fortunes of the English in India had fallen to their lowest watermark."* The French struck hard at our vital communications by sea, despatching expedition after expedition, the chief of all being that which reached India early in 1782 under the command of Admiral Suffren, one of the most eminent of French seamen, who "to an imperturbable coolness in action united an extreme ardour and activity."† All the ability of Warren Hastings, all the tenacity of General Sir Eyre Coote, and all the pugnacity of Admiral Sir Edward Hughes, barely sufficed to enable us to hold our own, and still the prospect darkened when, early in 1783, there arrived in India a large reinforcement of French infantry. Even before the reception of that contingent Suffren clearly contemplated that the French were not far from being "masters of India for ever."‡ Nevertheless, the unconquerable stubbornness of England saved her once again: by sheer luck or by sheer pluck we managed to outride the tempest. So when the news reached India, in the middle of 1783, that France had concluded peace with England, no one was more rejoiced than Suffren himself,§ as he turned his sails homeward from that inhospitable strand upon which, in spite of the ceaseless hostility of Mysore and the exhausting raids of the Mahrattas, allied with the ultimate efforts of the valour of the

* Lyall, "British Dominion in India," 2nd edition, p. 168.

† Hennequin, "Essai Historique sur la vie et les Campagnes du Bailli de Suffren."

‡ *Gazette de France*; letter of Suffren dated July 14, 1782, published in the issue of the *Gazette* dated March 31, 1783.

§ Mahan, "Influence of Sea-power upon History," p. 464.

old *régime* of France, the bulldog courage of England had remained invincible.

But though we had held our own satisfactorily against those whom Warren Hastings, on leaving India soon after these events, called "our great enemy, the French," we were very far indeed from having done with them. Ten years passed away; 1793 came; and France once more prepared to strike us out of India.

For some years after 1793 the hostility exercised by the French upon our Indian possessions, however insidious and constant, was not highly organized. But at length their designs received an incalculable stimulus from the constructive brain of Napoleon. His definite ideas as to Oriental conquest probably began to take shape and order during the year 1797, for it was in Italy, on the soil of the Romans, that Roman ambitions fermented within him apace. Already, on the evening of Lodi, his soldiers had saluted him as *le petit caporal*; and in that moment, as he afterwards declared at St. Helena, his smouldering and indeterminate aspirations began to concentrate into a steady flame.* Then had followed the fights for Mantua, with their culminating hour of glory among the morasses of Arcola. So that from Arcola again he ever dated the unquestionable emergence of his star.† From his foothold in Italy his luminous but impassioned vision travelled eastward, as though another Cæsar or another Alexander had been born again; and early in 1797 he made easy terms with the enemy, for already he had begun, in his own language, "to weary of this ancient

* Lodi was fought May 10, 1796.

† Arcola was fought November 15, 1796.

Europe," and to hold communion in spirit with the gorgeous East.*

The Directory, without much delay, bowed to his wishes, and entered into his conceptions of the future, perhaps all the more readily in that they might thus be rid of him. And accordingly, by a secret decree, the youthful conqueror, on his return from Italy, was authorized to seize Malta, and next Egypt, and lastly to wrest from the English "all their possessions in the East to which the general can come."† From that moment India was threatened once more. Conquered she was not to be, for by an extraordinary and happy circumstance, a few days after the signature of these orders by the French government, the reins of our Indian administration were grasped by perhaps the greatest of our viceroys and pro-consuls, the Marquis Wellesley, a statesman not less fitted to cope with Napoleon in the field of civil politics than was his brother the Duke of Wellington on the field of battle.‡

There were three ways in which the French could disturb, or uproot, us in our possession of India. They could despatch expeditions by way of Egypt or of Russia in the direction of the Indian frontier. Or, secondly, they possessed Mauritius as a central place of arms, from which they could incessantly damage

* Cf. Rose, "Life of Napoleon I.," vol. i. p. 142-143; "certain it is that he desired to disengage himself from their affairs, so as to be free for the grander visions of Oriental conquest that now haunted his imagination."

† Secret decree, dated April 12, 1798.

‡ "Memorandum on Marquess Wellesley's Government of India," by the Duke of Wellington, then Sir A. Wellesley, dated 1806; first paragraph gives May, 1798, as date of Wellesley's assumption of office. But he landed at Madras on April 26, 1798, precisely a fortnight after the date of the decree in question.

our commerce and launch regiments across the Indian ocean. Or, thirdly, they could secretly detach officers and men to organize the native levies and stiffen the battalions of Holkar, or Sindia, or the Peshwa, or Tippoo, or the Nizam. It was against this third expedient of the enemy that Lord Wellesley had to fight first.

In order that it should be taken as certain that this picture of the pressure exercised by France upon India at this date is not exaggerated, an extract may be given from the instructions imparted to Lord Wellesley at this time by the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors—

“Our empire in the East,” the letter runs, “has ever been an object of jealousy to the French, and we know that their former government entertained sanguine hopes of being able to reach India by a shorter route than round the Cape of Good Hope, and we have no doubt that the present government would risk a great deal, and even adopt measures of a most enterprising and uncommon nature, for the chance of reducing, if not of annihilating, the British power and consequence in that quarter of the world. To effect this, without the aid and previous consent of one of the Indian powers, seems almost impossible, and would scarcely be attempted. In the present situation of India, Tippoo appears to be the fittest instrument to be employed in the furtherance of such ambitious projects.”*

As a comment on all this, it may be added that on the same day that the new governor-general landed, a considerable body of French troops landed also in Southern India.

It was not, however, against Tippoo, but against

* Extract of letter from the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors to the Governor-General in Council of Bengal, dated June 18, 1798.

the Nizam that Lord Wellesley's first action was taken. The Duke of Wellington declares that, at this date, "the only support of the authority of the Nizam was a corps consisting of about 14,000 men, trained, disciplined, and commanded by French officers . . . they were becoming a French state in the peninsula of India."* The governor-general, however, soon procured their disbandment and dismissal. Then came the turn of Tippoo, "the certain ally of the French in India."† He fell in 1799. The next to be disposed of was Sindia, the Mahratta chief. Previous to Lord Wellesley's appearance in India, a Frenchman, De Boigne, had been busy organizing the armies of Sindia. History has been perhaps too partial to the memory of that adventurer. "He stands out," says Colonel Malleon, "as pre-eminently the foremost European figure between the departure of Warren Hastings and the arrival of Marquis Wellesley. It was De Boigne who made it possible for Sindia to rule in Hindostan."‡ "Though moving in an obscure scene," says Keene, "De Boigne was one of the great personages of the world's drama."§ Too flattering eulogies on one who organized the phantom armies of Sindia! Phantoms they proved to be before the irresistible Wellesley, who in 1803 could at length write to his directors that "the governor-general-in-council has the satisfaction to inform your honourable committee that no French officers of any consideration now remain in the

* "Memorandum on Marquess Wellesley's Government of India," above quoted.

† Ibid.

‡ Malleon, "Final French Struggles in India," p. 189.

§ Keene, "The Fall of the Mogul Empire," quoted by Malleon, p. 190.

service of the confederated Mahratta chieftains."* At last the field had been swept clear within the bounds of the peninsula itself.

No sooner, however, had all this been accomplished than the indefatigable governor-general seized the occasion to press upon Lord Castlereagh the necessity of counteracting French designs in the second sphere already indicated above, that is, Mauritius. "The early conquest of the Isle of France would be an object of the utmost importance to the commerce and political security of these possessions."†

To those who love the annals of adventure and incredible daring, the island of Mauritius, or Isle of France, will always be associated with the exploits of those privateers or pirates, Surcouf, Lemême, and Jean Dutertre. They were the scourge and flail of British commerce in the Indian seas. What was more serious, they were the light and agile raiders behind the veil of whose enterprise of plunder undertakings of more serious metal could be organized unobserved. The first of these men had the honour in 1803 to be consulted by Napoleon himself as to the best means of doing mischief to England.

"If I were in your place," was the answer of Surcouf, which perhaps won for him his Legion of Honour, "I would burn all my line of battle-ships; I would never deliver battle to the English fleets and squadrons. But I would construct and send into every sea frigates and light ships in such extraordinary numbers that the commerce of the enemy must be speedily annihilated."

* Owen, "Selections from Wellesley's Despatches," p. 375; despatch dated October 31, 1803.

† Despatch dated July 25, 1803.

Surcouf and his brethren practised what they preached. Against these pestilential robbers Lord Wellesley determined to wage a war of extermination. It was not, however, given to him to accomplish that object, and Mauritius was not taken by us until 1810.

“With her conquest ended the career of the privateers of the Indian seas. They vanished from the island which had nurtured them. Thenceforward the huge Indiamen of the company could sail in comparative safety. In the course of a few years not only did the dread of the French cruisers vanish, but their exploits came to be listened to with a smile.”*

The remaining method by which France continued to trouble us in India was the threat of an invasion overland. It has already been indicated that the Egyptian campaign of 1798 was the first overland onslaught of France against India. It failed. But at the close of 1800 it was revived in another form by Napoleon and by the monarch of another power scarcely less formidable to India, the Czar of Russia. A Russian army was to muster at Astrakhan; the French were to assemble at the mouth of the Danube, cross Azov and the Caspian, and, leaving Persia, were to sweep through the Afghan passes over the Indian plains. †

The response of Lord Wellesley and of our government was twofold. Captain Malcolm was despatched on a mission to Persia, where, in the words of the governor-general, he “established a firm and intimate connection between the British government and a State, the resources of which are

* Malleson, “Final French Struggles in India,” p. 157.

† Cf. Driault, “La Question d’Orient,” chap. iii.

capable of aiding in an essential manner the hostile views of the enemies of the British nation against our Eastern possessions." * But already the Czar had been murdered, and the scheme had fallen through. India's other counterstroke was to despatch a force to Egypt against the French army still in that country. But the Peace of Amiens removed the necessity for that intended blow.

Nevertheless, in spite of these failures, the restless determination of Napoleon scarcely withdrew for a moment from the contemplated attack. The years from 1801 to 1805 are replete with his schemes against India. In the latter year some substantial progress seemed at length to reward his efforts, when Persia, tired of our alliance, appealed directly to him. His envoy at Teheran was promptly instructed to form a triple alliance between France, Turkey, and Persia for the purpose of opening out a route to India.

The prospect steadily improved when, in 1807, after Friedland, Napoleon was enabled to renew his alliance with Russia and to organize a confederation far more formidable than heretofore against our position in Hindostan. But fate again interposed in our favour. The Spanish rising of 1808, and the growing estrangement of France and Russia, finally distracted Napoleon from his Oriental schemes. They had lasted ten years, and had proved hopeless, so that for twenty years henceforward, from 1808 to 1828, when Russia made her long stride eastward, our fears could abate.

But the schemes of Napoleon ended in something more than an utter failure.

* Despatch to the Honourable the Secret Committee, dated September 28, 1801.

“This furnished Lord Wellesley with the necessary leverage for driving onward his policy of bringing into subjection or subordinate alliance every Mahomedan or Maratha state that might cross our path towards undisputed predominance in the interior of India. The intelligence of Napoleon’s projects first diverted our attention from the sea-board to our land frontiers, and first launched the British government upon that much larger expanse of Asiatic war and diplomacy in which it has ever since been, with intervals, engaged.” *

But enough has been said to indicate, in relation to India, how serious was the pressure exercised upon it as upon other parts of the empire during this epoch; and also to enforce the general theme of this chapter as to the stimulus thereby afforded us to rebuild that empire which the temporary absence of such pressure had broken up.

The fifth and last department of the empire after Canada, and the West Indies, and Cape Colony, and India, was Australia. The history of Australia illustrates no less forcibly the political law, which has been so much insisted on, that foreign animosity was our chief motive for the renewed empire. In 1783 we had finally lost America. In that very year a certain petitioner, in a memorial to the British government, mentioned that fact as a reason why it was now imperative to possess ourselves of Australia. “A feeling of jealous apprehension existed at this time that the French contemplated forming settlements in the far Pacific, and this doubtless led Lord Sydney to accept more readily the scheme for colonizing the distant territory” † which Captain Cook, closely followed by French explorers, had first investigated in

* Lyall, “British Dominion in India,” p. 244.

† Greville Tregarthen, “The Australian Commonwealth,” p. 15.

1769. And, indeed, scarcely had the first transport landed in Botany Bay in 1788, when a strange sail was seen off the harbour's mouth. "I flew upon deck," wrote an officer of marines on board at the time, "on which I had barely set my foot, when the cry of 'another sail' struck on my astonished ear." These two sails were Frenchmen, under the command of La Perouse.

It was Napoleon, however, who first determined on active measures against Australia. On his voyage to Egypt he took with him the volumes in which Captain Cook described his famous discoveries; * and in 1800 he planned a French expedition to Australia. A map was prepared, and the southern part of that continent was christened *Terre Napoleon Nouvelle*. This expedition, though nominally scientific, was really political in its design, and our government in 1803 sent out orders that every provision should be taken against French annexation. We made precautionary annexations on our side, and thus "the French cruise exerted on the fortunes of the English and French peoples an influence such as has frequently accrued from their colonial rivalry: it spurred on the island power to more vigorous efforts than she would have otherwise put forth." †

* Rose, "Life of Napoleon I.," vol. i. p. 379, *et seq.*, for further details and the map constructed under the orders of Napoleon.

† Rose, p. 382.

CHAPTER VII

THE AGE OF COBDEN

THE last chapter carried the subject up to the year 1815, which marked the close of the Napoleonic struggle. The present chapter will lead up to about 1870, at the end of which time, from the point of view of this volume, a new epoch began. The period thus actually in question embraces what is sometimes known in the annals of the empire as the age of Cobden, but it will be shown that, without detracting from the merits of that personage, world-wide forces produced and conditioned the principles of which he was so persuasive an exponent, so that we must dig far deeper than the footprints of a single man.

For three centuries prior to 1815 two luminaries had alternately dominated in the constellation of Europe. For about the first century and a half of that period Spain had been the centre of attraction, or rather the House of Hapsburg at Vienna and at Madrid. But midway in the seventeenth century that orb was no longer in the ascendant, but, discarding beam after beam of its glory, tended in stormy and sullen magnificence towards the west. In the moment of its setting, however, the France of Louis XIV. had crowned the opposite verge of the horizon, and delighted the universe of nations with its radiant star.

France reigned long, but at length in 1815 Napoleon, the political successor of Louis XIV., had vanished, so that the European world groped and waited for a new revelation. That revelation was vouchsafed speedily: the new Phaethon was the Czar.

All question of the Czar apart, this collapse of the two great maritime nations of Spain and France was evidently a fact of considerable importance for the colonial empire of Britain. The pressure upon our possessions oversea had suddenly abated, now that hostile navies no longer circled the world, and hence we should expect to find, on the principle already so often referred to in these pages, that our empire would tend to be impaired. The exception to this was India, where the pressure of Russia promoted an extension of the empire.

The formula which, so far as formulas may, resumes the political history of Europe for forty years after 1815, is, the universal weakness of the continental nations and the comparative strength and progress of Russia. Both Spain, and France, and Germany, and Austria, and Italy were relatively feeble and distracted during this long age, and that phenomenon found a reflection in the relations of ourselves and our colonies.

If we confine our attention to the period from 1815 to 1830, it will be noticed that during those years a series of political cyclones swept over Europe, and shook established authority in Spain, in Portugal, in Italy, and in Greece. Nor was this all. These revolutions were swiftly followed by the French Revolution of 1830, and by other cataclysms in Belgium and Poland. Seven revolutions in little more than fifteen years! After 1830 the revolutionary movement did

not abate by any means, but culminated, on the contrary, in 1848 in a series of explosions which burst throughout Europe. It was this volcanic unrest in Europe which impeded the continent, except Russia, from attending to the new world.

To consider the leading nations in turn, France suffered in quick succession from four catastrophes, the fall of Napoleon, the fall of Charles X. in 1830, the fall of Louis Philippe in 1848, and the fall of the Republic in 1852. These outbreaks were the visible sign of her internal chaos and discontent. Spain during this period was constantly threatened with anarchy. In Prussia it was different. But her "world-programme" was not yet in being. Her policy, according to Prince Bismarck's sarcasm, was made alternately during this period at Vienna or at Petersburg; or again, according to the same authority, prior to 1866 her claim to be a great power could only be accepted *cum grano salis*. Besides, she had suffered very severely in the revolutionary epoch, and her population was still too disorganized, her frontier still too inadequate and too exposed to the assaults of her neighbours, to countenance anything but a modest policy in the wide world. Austria was rent from head to foot with revolution and with racial discord. She ruled in Italy, but only by force; she maintained herself in Germany, but only by sleight of hand; she dominated Hungary, but only by the aid of Russian bayonets. As for Italy, she was still a geographical expression. This general debility of Europe was an asset in the balance of the Czar.

It would, however, be far beyond the present purpose to tell, and indeed it has been described

elsewhere,* the nature of the preponderance enjoyed by Russia during this epoch in European politics. But it is more appropriate to notice her progress in Asia, since every step that she took in that direction was marked by statesmen at Calcutta and exercised a profound influence upon the growth of our Indian dominion. Year by year what France had been to our Anglo-Indians in the eighteenth century, in the nineteenth Russia became.

The empires of Russia and of Britain may be described as coeval, for it was in the reign of our Queen Elizabeth that Russia's eastward march began. Since that date she had penetrated fast and far through the yielding texture of Asia, until in 1813 she had concluded the treaty of Gulistan at the expense of Persia. Long our friend, Russia was now our enemy, or at least our rival, for in the great crises of 1780, of 1800, and of 1807, when our existence had hung in the balance, she had lifted her dagger against us. Hence already, in 1815, our statesmen, looking over the Pamirs and over the Indus, might discern a foe.

The terms of the treaty of Gulistan were very sweeping, and that instrument is remarkable for the number and extent of privileges secured to Russia, while Persia received nothing on her side. Had not the energies of England been absorbed at that moment in the Napoleonic struggle, its signature might have created a sensation in India and at home; or perhaps Persia was as yet too far away to excite much concern at any time. "The Indian continent beyond the Sutlej river was, in 1813, beyond the pale of our direct activity," † and the policy of Lord

* "The Enemies of England," pp. 213-236.

† Ross, "Life of Hastings," p. 60.

Hastings was carefully to avoid all quarrels with tribes living beyond the Indus.

Nevertheless, as the years passed, this attitude of inattention passed gradually away, and the year 1828 should be named as the one in which Englishmen awoke once for all to the Russian danger. In February of that year Russia extorted from Persia the disastrous treaty of Turcomanchai, which prostrated her at the feet of the Czar, by assigning to the latter a large monetary indemnity, the re-enactment of all the clauses of the treaty of Gulistan, some important Khanates, and practically the whole of the Caucasus. Two months later in Europe, the Russian army crossed the Pruth for a military promenade towards Constantinople, and succeeded in extracting from the Turk the treaty of Adrianople, which caused Wellington to declare that the Turkish empire was at an end. These events thoroughly aroused us. "The possibility of a Russian invasion of India was discussed in 1828 as freely as it has been since." * "About 1830, people were following with anxious eyes the rapid growth of the Muscovite power." †

These various excitements and emotions culminated at length in the minute drawn up by the governor-general, Lord William Bentinck, in 1835. "Persia," he pointed out, "is unequal to any great effort unassisted by Russia;" but "the advance of a combined force of Russians and Persians would give them in the first campaign possession of Herat, the key of Kabul." And what would happen next?

"It is difficult to deny that from Herat Russia may proclaim a crusade against British India, in which she

* Boulger, "Lord William Bentinck," p. 165.

† Trotter, "Lord Auckland," p. 39.

would be joined by all the warlike restless tribes that formed the overwhelming force of Timur. . . . The Afghan confederacy, even if cordially united, would have no means to resist the power of Russia and Persia."*

These fears issued again in the great outburst of Russophobia of the years 1838 and 1839, of which the military result was the Afghan war. Already we considered Herat and Candahar to be, in the phrase of Sir Henry Rawlinson, "the Malakoff and Mamelon of our position in the East;"† or, in the words of Sir Alfred Lyall, "the English were again coming into contact with a rival European influence on Asiatic ground."‡ Henceforth we knew at every turn of policy that across wide deserts and lofty mountains and debatable boundaries there was the nightly bivouac and the daily march of many legions.

It is true, indeed, that for many years after the Afghan War Russia appeared to stay her hand eastward. Perhaps our own difficulties in that campaign taught her a lesson as to the obstacles in her path, or perhaps the energies we had displayed prescribed caution. "It is possible, then, that the acquisitive policy of Russia in respect to Persia, and her agitating policy in respect to India, did actually cool as the result of the Afghan War."§ Besides, there was continued rebellion in the Caucasus, so that between the Afghan War and the Indian Mutiny she "honestly and unremittingly employed her utmost available power to reduce the tribes of the Caucasus." Yet, in spite of the fact that, for reasons such as these, her conduct

* Minute, dated March 13, 1835.

† Rawlinson, "England and Russia in the East," p. 210.

‡ Lyall, "British Dominion in India," p. 270.

§ Rawlinson, "England and Russia in the East," p. 69.

became "more guarded than formerly, and more observant to England, it was not less consistent in its aim or less progressive in its action. Her shadow was gradually darkening over the land." *

The practical result of this danger lowering in the north-west was a continuous extension of our dominion in that direction, and consequently a never-ceasing accumulation of responsibilities piled up upon the shoulders of the East India Company, so far as that company could be said to rule India. The burden was becoming far too heavy; the Indian Mutiny proved that beyond question; everybody now perceived that India must be definitely annexed to Britain, and that the pressure of hostile forces against us necessitated the complete amalgamation of Hindostan into the empire.

In these conditions, Lord Palmerston, in 1858, introduced the bill "transferring India from the East India Company to the Crown." † It was the end of that long evolution begun in 1773. Yet even in 1858 Lord Palmerston could still describe India as being ruled by "a totally irresponsible body," possessed of "a power paramount to everything else, the power of recalling the governor-general." This irresponsibility must cease: this independence must finally be ceded, now that India had entered definitely into the circle of the high politics of Europe, and that the heavy hand of Russia pressed her down into unity with ourselves.

So far, then, this chapter has shown that during

* Rawlinson, "England and Russia in the East," pp. 70-71. This was written in 1849.

† Hansard, February 12, 1858; third series, vol. 148. This bill did not pass, owing to the fall of the ministry. Another passed into law later on in that year.

the age succeeding 1815, one great power, at least, namely Russia, still continued to exercise a most formidable influence against a main portion of our dominions, and that this resulted in the consolidation of the empire in the region of Hindostan. But Russia, not being a sea-power, had no corresponding influence upon our colonies of Canada, of South Africa, of Australia, and the rest. In respect of these, since all Europe, with the exception of Russia, was prostrated by the ordeals of the Napoleonic age, or absorbed with the problems of internal revolution, Europe ceased to threaten our colonial empire. The pressure upon our colonists was thus suddenly mitigated, with the inevitable result that men began to ask themselves whether the time had not perhaps arrived for mutual independence. What was the need of empire? Why not institute an age of universal peace and brotherhood, in which imperialism should have no presence, nation should not lift up sword against nation, neither should they learn war any more? If federation was to exist at all henceforward, let it be, in the words of Tennyson, the federation of the world. In 1851 that age seemed to have dawned at length, and to commemorate this new departure we organized the Universal Exhibition, a palace of dream among the elms of Kensington.

That this tendency towards disruption is not imaginary may be demonstrated by quotations from a concourse of contemporary authorities.

In the years succeeding 1815, one of the most important ministers was Huskisson, who as President of the Board of Trade devoted very close attention to colonial affairs. In one of his colonial speeches he used the phrase that "England cannot afford to be

little."* He was most eager for the connection. He declared with regret, in 1828, that "I have witnessed in some degree in this House a disposition to think that the public interest in this country would be best consulted by our at once relinquishing all control and dominion over these possessions."† Yet even Huskisson does not doubt that our colonies will be "free nations—the communicators of freedom to other nations."‡ He only dares to hope that, whenever the connection be dissolved, "the separation may not be embittered by acrimony and bloodshed."§

A few years later, in 1837, the Duke of Wellington saw "insurrection everywhere"|| in the colonies, and strongly deprecated the grant of free institutions, as leading to independence.

Sir Robert Peel feared the same: he told Mr. Gladstone in 1837 that "you have got another Ireland growing up in every colony you possess."¶

Mr. Gladstone, in turn, some years later, admitted that—

"we should look to a time when our colonies shall assert that they are suited for the management of their own affairs. I am not very sanguine of the future, but it is of the utmost importance that when these new states come to be launched into the world, they should have among themselves the elements of good institutions."**

Lord John Russell, in his great speech in 1850 on colonial policy, was full of the utmost anxiety to

* Speech of May 2, 1828, on the Civil Government of Canada.

† "Speeches," vol. iii. p. 286.

‡ Christie, vol. iii. p. 174.

§ "Speeches," vol. iii. p. 322.

|| Morley, "Life of Gladstone," 1st edition, vol. i. p. 143.

¶ Ibid.

** Hansard, vol. 109, p. 1340.

preserve the union with the colonies. "It is our bounden duty," he said. He hoped that free institutions might "promote a harmonious feeling." But he wound up by declaring that when the time comes for separation, "we of this great empire shall have the consolation of saying that we have contributed to the happiness of the world."*

Two years later, Disraeli wrote that "these wretched colonies will all be independent, too, in a few years, and are a millstone round our necks."†

Finally, not to multiply quotations unduly, there is the opinion of Lord Blachford, who from 1860 to 1871 was the permanent under-secretary for the colonies. In the Memorandum of Colonial Policy drawn up as the final expression of his wishes and experience, he pointed out that, soon after 1830, a demand arose for representative government in the colonies, "which, as in America, unavoidably and rapidly developed into practical independence—the governor being in essentials little more than the ambassador of a great state to a weaker one, which relies on the protection of the more powerful." His mature and deliberate verdict was that "I had always believed—and I can hardly realize the possibility of any one seriously thinking the contrary—that the destiny of our colonies is independence."‡ Accordingly, "our separation should be as amicable as possible." And this was the opinion of the man who was fully conversant with the whole situation, had no party motives to distort his judgment, and

‡ * Hansard, vol. 108, p. 549; February 8, 1850.

† Letter dated August 13, 1852, to Lord Malmesbury; Malmesbury, "Memoirs of an Ex-Minister," vol. i. p. 344.

‡ "Letters of Lord Blachford," pp. 296-300.

who during those years largely directed the colonial policy of England.

In addition to the above, there may be cited the opinions of two of the most eminent thinkers and writers on the subject of our colonies. Sir George Cornwall Lewis published his "Essay on the Government of Dependencies" in 1841; while, in the same year, Herman Merivale, subsequently under-secretary of the colonies for many years, issued his famous "Lectures on Colonization and Colonies."

Sir George Lewis lays it down as a political ideal that, if a dominant country understood its true interests, "it would voluntarily recognize the legal independence of such of its own dependencies as were fit for independence; it would, by its political arrangements, study to prepare for independence those which were still unable to stand alone."* Merivale, writing similarly, points out that "there is always looming in the distance the phantom of colonial disaffection;" and that, though no statesman wishes for it in his own day, all alike are "prepared to recognize colonial independence as the natural ultimate result of modern colonial policy."† And in the concluding paragraph of his work, he declared that "whenever the disruption may arrive, it will probably be evident that it was some small and unforeseen matter which precipitated the event," so slight and attenuated had the ties of empire become.

Enough has been said to afford convincing proof of an important truth regarding the British empire in the middle portion of the nineteenth century. The most serious and patriotic British statesmen of

* Chap. xi. p. 324, edition of 1891.

† Edition of 1861, Appendix to Lecture 18, pp. 519-520.

all shades of party and of all opinions were profoundly convinced, as they looked at the facts before them, of the dissolution, at a period either imminent or remote, of the British empire.

There was a cause for this despondency. Our colonies were daily asserting their right to practical independence. The ebb-tide of hostile international forces beat no more on the quays of their distant continents. So they looked round the world and felt their own safety arising partly from their own increasing strength, and partly from the apparent indifference of the world to them. In fact, this was the age when, according to the words of Mr. Gladstone, "each of our colonies, in an infancy of irrepressible vigour, was bursting its swaddling clothes." *

It was inevitable that the cause which was leading the colonies to independence should act also upon our own statesmen. Nevertheless, the wisest men of all parties still ardently desired the union of the empire, if with little hope. Behind them, however, stood the extremists, who seemed sometimes to welcome separation. The sum of these conflicting views was that England looked more critically at her colonies. For them we had made unbounded sacrifices, and had poured out our blood and treasure like water; yet now, like the Americans in old days, they seemed bent on effecting a gradual separation, on the earliest assurance of their own security. But our precise attitude is best illustrated by a particular instance, our treatment of the military forces which, after 1815, we had to maintain for the protection of the colonies.

In 1816, to begin with, we had to undertake the very arduous responsibility of maintaining 24,000

* Gladstone in *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1890, p. 50.

troops stationed in the old colonies, that is, the colonies possessed by us before the war; and 22,000 in the new colonies which we had acquired during its progress. Add to these 3000 troops as a reserve for reliefs in the colonial garrisons. According to Lord Palmerston, speaking at that date in the House of Commons, "plans of retrenchment were loudly called for." But Palmerston resisted with the utmost vigour, declaring the issue to be "whether we should compel the Crown to abandon all our colonial possessions, the fertile sources of our commercial wealth, and descend from that high and elevated station which it had cost us so much labour, so much blood, and so much treasure to attain."* And this was the general attitude of our responsible statesmen.

Nevertheless, the question remained with us, and sometimes assumed an urgent shape, until at length Sir Robert Peel, in his budget speech of 1845, felt it incumbent upon him to handle it.

"The main expense on account of the army," said the Prime Minister, "is caused by the extent of your colonial possessions. . . . In the year 1792, which has been frequently referred to as the criterion of what our military establishment ought to be—in the year 1792 you had 22 colonial dependencies; in the year 1820 you had 34 colonial dependencies; and in the present year, 1845, the colonies, which were 22 in 1792, have increased to 45. It is the number of your colonies that leads to the necessity of frequent relief, and imposes on you, with reference to your army particularly, as distinguished from the armies of the continental powers, in order to maintain the efficiency of that force, a considerable annual expenditure. It may be said that it was unwise thus to extend our colonial empire. Sir, I should be unwilling, though I know our colonies are expensive, and I know they are numerous

* Ashley, "Life of Lord Palmerston," vol. i. pp. 73-75.

—I should be unwilling to give up that policy which has laid the foundation in different parts of the globe of dependencies animated by the spirit of Englishmen, speaking the English language, and laying the foundation, perhaps, in future times of free, populous, and commercial States. . . . I know, sir, that some temporary popularity might be gained by advising a reduction, but . . . I am bound to say that I do not think it would be consistent with sound policy, or with economy, to propose—while you retain your colonial empire—a reduction in the military establishment of the country.”*

The next date which forms an epoch in our consideration of this particular issue of colonial military expenditure was 1861. In that year a Select Committee reported upon the whole subject. Dividing our colonies into colonies proper, such as Canada, and into military garrisons, such as Gibraltar or Hong-kong, they found that the former cost us £1,700,000 a year.† The committee reported that “the responsibility and cost of the military defence of such dependencies ought mainly to devolve upon themselves.”‡ This decision they adopted not merely “with a view to diminish imperial expenditure, but for the still more important purpose of stimulating the spirit of self-reliance in colonial communities.”

These latter expressions must not be misunderstood. The members of that committee, General Peel, Lord Stanley, Lord Robert Cecil (afterwards Lord Salisbury), were not “Little Englanders.” But they argued that scattered detachments of troops wasted and dissipated our strength and resources, and that “it is

* “Speeches of Sir Robert Peel,” vol. iv. pp. 441-442.

† Report of Select Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure; Parliamentary Paper 423 of 1861; dated July 11, 1861; p. iv. of Report.

‡ Ibid., p. vi.

desirable to concentrate the troops required for the defence of the United Kingdom as much as possible, and to trust mainly to naval supremacy" * for securing the distant dependencies of the empire. In fact, it is perfectly certain that the view of the committee in recommending the withdrawal of imperial troops from the colonies was in no sense caused by a desire to be rid of them.

Although this was so, there are one or two statements in the evidence rendered by important witnesses before the committee of singular interest, as illustrating the opinions of that age. Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke, was himself in early days a colonial statesman, and said of himself that "I am not presumptuous, I believe, in saying that if I had remained in Australia I might have looked forward to filling the post of premier there." † When questioned as to the future of the empire, he replied that "I cannot help looking forward to a period which may arrive when some of those colonies may wish to separate from the mother country." ‡ He thought it would facilitate the inevitable separation if there were no imperial troops in the colonies at that crisis. Mr. Gladstone, another witness, agreed that "the presence of the British troops might very seriously entangle and embroil the beginning of the controversy." But British statesmen did not want separation, whatever they thought of its likelihood.

To conclude this portion of the subject, in 1862 the House of Commons, on the report of its Select

* Report of Select Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure ; Parliamentary Paper 423 of 1861 ; dated July 11, 1861 ; p. vii. of Report.

† Answer 3338.

‡ Answer 3333.

Committee, unanimously resolved that "colonies exercising the rights of self-government ought to undertake the main responsibility of providing for their own internal order and security, and ought to assist in their own external defence." Every subsequent administration endorsed and embodied this principle, "until in 1873 the under-secretary of the colonies was able to announce that the military expenditure for the colonies was now almost entirely for imperial purposes."*

So far, then, as this chapter has proceeded, it has established the following conclusions. First, for many years after 1815, Russia alone seriously threatened the empire; the result of this pressure was that we hurried forward towards Afghanistan, that the new responsibilities then undertaken became at length too onerous for the capacity of a mere East India Company, and that in 1858 India was annexed. Secondly, just as the pressure of Russia indirectly caused the absorption of India by us and the consolidation of the empire in that quarter, so conversely the absence of similar pressure against our growing colonies gave scope to the exhibition by them of a spirit which our most experienced and practical statesmen generally considered to be introductory to final independence. In this connection it has been indicated also that, however much our statesmen might anticipate this melancholy consummation as inevitable, they did not regard it as desirable.

Undoubtedly the middle years of the century were filled with many gloomy and distressing omens of dissolution. From Canada to Australia the same

* Todd, "Parliamentary Government in the British Colonies," p. 297.

phenomena recur. In Canada in 1849 a powerful organization was formed which boldly asked for separation. At the other end of the world, "the Australian colonies, as they grew in importance, grew in self-assertion," and it was clear that—so far, at any rate, as the surface of politics was concerned—"the time was one of disloyalty and dislike of the British connection."* Matters dragged on until, according to one of the best informed of the historians of the empire, "it is not too much to say that the relations between England and her colonies have seldom been more strained than during the years 1869-70."† Even in New Zealand herself, "independence or annexation to the United States was openly spoken of, and prominent men were reported to be in favour of a Declaration of Independence."‡ Writing in 1841, Herman Merivale had pointed out "how little of substantial attachment England finds in those colonies which she still possesses,"§ and as the years passed the imperial structure seemed to gape with fissures and fractures at every story of the gigantic edifice.

Nevertheless, although all this was true enough, it is not all the truth; these considerations do not cover the whole broad field under survey, for in spite of the glad hopes of reformers and the aspirations of the advocates of universal pacification, the warlike ambition of nations soon began to show its dreadful image again. Gradually, throughout the tangled web of human fortune, the colours of peace

* H. E. Egerton, "A Short History of British Colonial Policy," pp. 382 and 387.

† *Ibid.*, p. 393.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

§ "Lectures on Colonization and Colonies," pp. 27-28.

were mingled ever more closely with others more garish, and faded before the scarlet thread of war. In proportion as this new factor became a certainty, the most vehement races of the world, as Lord Salisbury has called our people,* slowly abandoned their desires for independence, so that in the coming time the collapse of the empire was far less heard of, and Unity became our watchword in face of the pressure from without. It is of the deepest interest to trace that singular revival of the imperial organization which resulted from the renewed energies of the foreigner against us. So swift and obvious was the operation of this law of empire that it silenced almost suddenly the voices of all but the most advanced extremists.

This increased pressure of Europe against our colonial empire had its obscure beginnings in the middle of the century. It was partly connected with the extended application of science to naval warfare. Speaking so early as 1845, Lord Palmerston pointed out that "steam navigation has rendered that which was before impassable by a military force nothing more than a river passable by a steam bridge." † He was referring solely to the English Channel, but in due course the colonies would begin to apply that truth to themselves, and would feel that, remote as they might consider themselves, that remoteness would not save them henceforth from hostile European combinations directed with incredible swiftness against their commercial existence. But, of course, that time was not yet; progress was slow; "the first appearance of armoured ships dates

* Times Report, May 8, 1902.

† Hansard, vol. 82, p. 1223; speech of July 30, 1845.

back to the time of the Crimean War,"* and it was not till 1858 that France built her first armoured frigate, to be, in the words of Dupuy de Lôme, the famous naval architect, "a lion in a flock of sheep."

Still, it was from France that the renewed pressure was to arise. "We pay England the compliment," said Guizot in 1846, "of thinking only of her when determining our naval force;" next, there was the issue of a threatening pamphlet by the naval commander, Prince Joinville; there was "the report of the French naval commission of 1848, which showed plainly that the augmentation of the navy was directed against England."† All these, however, were but insignificant indications of an uncertain future, and of no genuine importance for the British Empire, as may be judged from the fact that the Queen's Speech of 1849 announced large reductions on the estimates.

Furthermore, on analyzing the French budgets of that epoch, it seems that French naval expenditure was still very low in 1851, only amounting in that year to £3,300,000. But in the next year Louis Napoleon became Emperor, and in 1854 the expenditure on that account had leapt up so high as to be over £7,000,000, and in the next year again to £8,700,000. England began to look rather nervously to herself. Pursuant to this subject, the Prince Consort, after meeting Napoleon at Cherbourg in 1858, wrote, "The war preparations of the French marine are immense! ours despicable! Our ministers

* Block, "Modern Weapons and Modern War," p. 96.

† Lord Cowley's words, used in 1859 to the Emperor Napoleon III.; Theodore Martin, "Life of Prince Consort," vol. iv. p. 471.

use fine phrases, but they do nothing. My blood boils within me."*

The real and sober truth was that, among the thick-coming schemes and fancies of the French emperor, a restoration of French influence oversea had a distinct place. Speaking in 1852, the year of his accession, he had indeed declared that "certain persons say that the empire is war. I say that the empire is peace." Nevertheless, he added a few sentences later: "We have waste territories to cultivate—harbours to dig—we have ruins to restore." Perhaps among those waste territories might be Africa; perhaps among those ruins he might be reckoning the lost colonial empire of France, east and west. And certainly facts appeared to reinforce these suspicions: from the farther east to the farthest west, from Annam and Cambodia, where he began to carve out the present French empire over against Australia, to the shores of Mexico, in which regions, since former days at Havre, he had dreamed of making headway, his occult and feverish energies were unceasingly at work. His imagination had figured forth some "new Constantinople," as he phrased it, rising midway between North and South America, like Byzantium on the confines of Asia and Europe, and redeeming the Latin races from their subordination to the teeming Anglo-Saxon stock.†

Even on another isthmus, that which divides Asia from Africa, the traveller caught the sense and significance of that ever-plotting mind. Sir Charles Dilke, writing in 1869, remarked that "it is evident enough

* Prince Consort to the Duchess of Kent, letter dated August 11, 1858; Theodore Martin, "Life of Prince Consort," vol. iv.

† De la Gorce, "Histoire du Second Empire," vol. iv. pp. 12-14.

that the Suez Canal scheme has been from the beginning a blind for the occupation of Egypt by France," who "seeks by successes on the side of India to bury the memories of Mexico." * Every step taken by the emperor, in whatever direction, began to echo round the British empire, making colonies and mother country beware. And besides all this, France, who in 1815 had been left with a miserable remnant of empire, some patches in India, Cayenne, some West Indian Islands, Pierre and Miquelon, and so forth, was gradually acquiring "in the whole Senegalian region . . . entire command of the situation;" † so that she might conceivably be learning somewhere in the remote regions of North and West Africa those secrets of imperial capacity which her sons had seemed ever able to master at one moment and to forget the next.

It is, assuredly, extremely instructive, in view of this "world-policy" of France, in which she was so soon to be succeeded by Germany, to turn to the opinions expressed upon this subject by the witnesses examined by the Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure in 1861. There may be traced the divergent views of those who rest in the peaceful atmosphere of the departing period and of those who are sensitive to the dangers of the coming time. One witness is impressed by "the remote situation of our colonies;" another thinks that "the Australian colonies have no permanent apprehension or idea of a foreign power or invasion." But, on the other hand, "in Australia there was a considerable panic first at the time of the Russian war;"

* Dilke, "Greater Britain," vol. ii. pp. 400 and 403.

† Scott-Keltie, "Partition of Africa," second edition, p. 98.

“the Australians have been constantly applying for more vessels to be placed at the disposal of the government against French aggression in the Pacific;” and there is “a strong feeling in Australia that so long as the French are allowed to acquire colonies so as to form a cordon round Australia, England should possess a constant naval force of considerable strength so as to prevent the possibility of the French landing upon the coast.” * Thus indifference and anxiety appeared in 1861 to be jostling each other in the colonial mind as to their own security. Presently, as the years passed, and as European armaments became more formidable, and as colonial statesmen took a wider outlook, the latter feeling would grow. For the world was rapidly learning the sombre fact about itself that, as Lord Palmerston told Cobden in 1862, man is “a quarrelling and a fighting animal.”

Finally, a few years later, Sir Charles Dilke found in Australia that, however wilder spirits might threaten us, “when you talk to an intelligent Australian you can always see that he fears that separation would be made the excuse for the equipment of a great and costly Australian fleet.” † Such a fleet would, however, have been not an “excuse,” so much as a stern and cruel necessity for the Australian taxpayer, a burden which he might be willing enough to hand over to the mother country. It was the same in Canada. The United States in 1866, in a renewal of her ancient spirit of hostility to Canada, had denounced the reciprocity treaty negotiated some years

* “Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure, 1861,” questions 3335, 2243, 2246, 2249, 2661.

† Dilke, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 151-152.

before, and, in view of this and other symptoms of antagonism, confederation had become an urgent and absolute necessity. It is to be hoped that the verdict expressed in 1869 by the authority last quoted need not be at all accepted by us, that "Canadian loyalty appears to consist mainly of hatred towards America," and that all the Canadians of that day with whom he conversed said to him, "Help us to become ten millions, and then we will stand alone." * If they did, it would but illustrate the great difference between those days and our own. At any rate, we can permit ourselves the hope and the certainty that since that date the somewhat practical emotions of 1869 have taken a nobler range.

Such, then, were the mighty forces of universal politics, whose abeyance after 1815 began to relax, and whose revival after 1850 began slowly to renew, the structure of the British empire. In the years immediately subsequent to 1870 the latter influence of reconstruction had definitely gained ascendancy over the minds of men. About 1870, as Mr. Froude has told us, "the old imperial temper revived." † This chapter has given the cause of that revival. Or again, speaking a few years later, Lord Carnarvon, at that date the Colonial Secretary, remarked that "we have of late been much perplexed by a new word which has crept in among us." ‡ The strange word was none other than "Imperialism."

* Dilke, *op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 75 and 78.

† Rees, "Life and Times of Sir George Grey," vol. ii. p. 463.

‡ Carnarvon, "Essays and Addresses," vol. iii. pp. 21-22; November 5, 1878.

CHAPTER VIII

IMPERIALISM

IN the last chapter it was pointed out that, from about 1815 to 1870, the hostile pressure against us of our continental rivals, with the exception of Russia, relaxed and abated in a marked degree. By consequence, there seemed less necessity for our people at home and abroad to co-operate in a common empire. So it was said by many, and thought by more.

The present chapter will trace, from about 1870 to our own day, the converse process in human affairs. Ours has been an age of renewed pressure, exercised upon us by the European powers. Conscription has filled the barrack-yards of the continent; new navies dispute with us the roadway of the high seas; and, stirred by such transformations, anxiety has touched every nerve of the British race. Hence the reorganization and extension of the empire. But self-interest has been singularly ennobled by sentiment. This has been due to the influence of the British Throne. For, after the lapse of three centuries, Queen Victoria and King Edward VII. have renewed the tradition of Elizabeth, and have quickened the empire to a sense of a more united and more majestic destiny.

“With regard to our colonial empire in general, the year 1869 had witnessed a certain amount of

excitement, not so much in the colonies themselves as among colonial politicians at home, on the general subject of the durability of the tie which connects the mother-country with these dependencies. . . . Considerable excitement was produced in the earlier part of 1870 in those classes who take interest in the subject, by the proceedings of a number of gentlemen, purporting to represent colonial feeling, who complained that the tendency of recent changes tended to loosen yet farther the tie, already so slight, which connected the various portions of the great British dominions."*

A conference of colonial representatives to be held in London was suggested, which, however, was opposed by Lord Granville, and led to nothing. But, in view of the desire for a better union now becoming general, Lord Carnarvon brought the general subject of our colonial relations before the House of Lords. He argued that although it might be difficult to point out any substantial instance in which the Home government had of late years overstepped the self-imposed limit which prevented us from interfering in the domestic affairs of the colonies, yet it was impossible to deny the existence of dissatisfaction on their part; and that the existence of this dissatisfaction indicated the necessity of attempting to strengthen the tie of connection which as yet subsisted between us. This was a fair account of the state of the case in 1870 from the point of view of the colonies. Some powerful influence had intervened to remedy an unsatisfactory position. That intervention came primarily from without.

The impulse towards the renewed consolidation of the empire came from the startling increase now proceeding in the armed strength of Europe. This

* "Annual Register," 1870, pp. 112-113.

phenomenon began to attract our attention and to influence our policy about 1870, and was brought home to us in a vivid manner by the amazing success of the Prussian armies against France in that year. This lesson naturally made an even deeper impression upon the immediate neighbours of Germany, who hastened, not unnaturally, to imitate the example of Moltke, Von Roon, and Bismarck. In a pamphlet of that time, the calculation is made on good authority that, shortly after the war, Russia was taking steps to command at short notice the services of upwards of two millions of soldiers; France, of nearly a million and a half; Germany, of above thirteen hundred thousand; and Austria, of above half a million.* This tremendous expansion had a marked effect upon opinion upon this side of the Channel. "Never," said Lord Derby, "since the world began, have such masses of men been drilled and disciplined for purposes of war;"† while other authorities drew the attention of the public to "the armed peace of Europe."‡

We began, in fact, very slowly and imperfectly to realize that a transformation scene of the most transcendent importance had arisen on the stage of the world.

It would be superfluous to survey at any length the details of this rearmament. But, at the same time, it is desirable to draw attention in particular to two factors in the situation: the increase in the military power of Russia, and the progress made by

* A. Simonneau, "Les Effectives, les Cadres, et les Budgets des Armées Européennes, Etude de Statistique comparée," Paris, 1875.

† Lord Derby, "Speeches," vol. i. p. 227: speech at Liverpool December 17, 1873.

‡ *Quarterly Review*, No. 281, Article III., 1876.

Germany with her fleet. For Germany and Russia were now the claimants for the leadership of Europe, and therefore most likely to come into contact with England, the immemorial guardian of the balance of power.

In the case of Russia, it may suffice to quote from the remarkable Ukase, or imperial manifesto, issued at the opening of 1874.

“Recent events,” it ran, “have proved that a state is strong, not by the numbers, but by the moral and intellectual education of its troops. But this education can be secured only by all classes of society alike devoting themselves to the sacred task of defending the country.”

The Ukase proceeds to enact that “the whole male population of the empire of Russia and the kingdom of Poland, on attaining the twentieth year of age, will be required to draw lots, the result of the drawing settling, once for all, who is to be enlisted for active service and who not.” “We deem it to be our highest privilege,” the Czar continued, “to lead Russia to greatness by pacific progress and the gradual development of her domestic resources. This development will not be delayed by the formation of a powerful army and navy.”* The effects of these potent instruments were unhappily not to be so pacific as the Czar seemed to believe. At any rate, they were to exercise a powerful effect upon the British empire.

Scarcely less ominous for our people was the development of Germany upon the sea. The idea of such a development dated in the main from the Danish war earlier in the century, when Prussia swallowed

* Ukase, dated January 1, 1874.

up a portion of Denmark and became possessed of the harbour of Kiel. It was not, however, till the war of 1870, when Germany acquired her full territorial organization, that the idea began to bear much fruit. "The primary object in view," it was announced in 1877, "is the defence of the German shores from attack and blockade; the secondary aim recommended is the protection of German commerce and German colonists abroad."* This implied the construction of a considerable fleet. Thus, of the two leading powers of Europe, Russia might soon be threatening our communications with India, or India itself, with her armies; while Germany, unassailable on land, might soon be reaching out against us on the waters.

Perhaps it is not an undue intrusion into party politics to say that it was Disraeli who most clearly struck the note of the coming time, and anticipated the exigencies of the country. His observations were, indeed, deeply tinged with party spirit, and were, very probably, not capable of proof; but they reflected the future if they distorted the past.

"If you look to the history of this country," he said in 1872, "since the advent of Liberalism forty years ago, you will find that there has been no effort so continuous, so subtle, supported with so much energy, and carried on with so much ability and acumen, as the attempt of Liberalism to effect the disintegration of the empire. Well, what has been the result of this attempt during the reign of Liberalism for the disintegration of the empire? It has entirely failed. The colonies have decided that the empire shall not be destroyed, and in my opinion no minister in this country will do his duty who neglects an opportunity of reconstructing, as much as possible, our colonial empire." †

* Cf. *Allgemeine Nord Deutsche Zeitung*, November, 1877.

† Speech at Crystal Palace, June 24, 1872.

Putting aside the party imputations, this utterance is momentous in several ways. It indicates a turn in the tide of public sentiment by the year 1872, as regards the empire; it shows that the colonies shared that sentiment; and lastly, it points to a policy of reconstruction. All this is a powerful illustration of the argument that the sense of general danger was tending about 1870 to bind the empire together. Among the symptoms of the change, a leading Liberal statesman in 1875 declared that all parties were now in substantial agreement as regards the empire.* "The affairs of my colonial empire," said the Queen's Speech of the next year, in significant language, "have received a large share of my attention."

There was soon to be a practical outcome of our perception of the new forces which promised to threaten us. In 1878 a Colonial Defence Committee was appointed to inquire and report as to the defences of the more important colonial ports, and to consider "how to provide some early and temporary defence in case of any sudden outbreak of hostilities." Its services terminated in the following year, 1879. In the latter year, however, a Royal Commission was at last appointed to inquire into the defence of British possessions and commerce abroad. The terms of reference state that there are—

"divers good causes and considerations, that a Commission should forthwith issue to inquire into the condition and sufficiency of the means, both naval and military, provided for the defence of the more important seaports within our colonial possessions and dependencies. . . . It is expedient to consider and determine in which of Our Stations and ports it is

* "Life of W. E. Forster," vol. ii. p. 99; Address to the Philosophical Institute, at Edinburgh, on the Colonies, 1875.

desirable, on account of their strategical or commercial importance, to provide an organized system of defence."*

It is evident, therefore, that by that date, so far as the home government was concerned, the necessity for providing against the new developments among the European powers had become fully recognized.

But, after all, the opinion of the statesmen of the United Kingdom constituted only one part of the whole body of opinions necessary for the unification of the empire. Did the colonists themselves appreciate, in their distant outposts, the novel issues of the time? Did they realize the vital necessity for themselves to unite in a scheme of co-operative defence? The Commissioners, in their report, take the view that our people abroad were already alive to the situation. They declare that—

"The relations between Great Britain and her colonies must alter as time goes on. The growth of the colonies in wealth and population will, in all human probability, be relatively more rapid than that of Great Britain; and their power to take a fair share of the defence of the empire will be constantly on the increase. We are fully sensible of the immense and increasing value of the colonies to the empire, and we appreciate as much as we respect their loyalty and patriotism. There is no sign of unwillingness on their part to assume as large a portion of the imperial burden as their strength will enable them to bear."†

In the view of the Commissioners, therefore, not only were the colonies already willing to share in the common responsibilities of empire, but also they

* *London Gazette*, September 12, 1879.

† Third and Final Report of the Royal Commissioners, para. 81.

would be able and willing to accept a more extended responsibility as time went on.

So far, then, as this chapter has proceeded, it has been shown that, whereas, prior to 1870, there was reason to observe signs of disintegration within the empire, a clear change was produced about that date, the cause for that alteration being the portentous increase in the armed energies of Europe. It is desirable, however, to establish that position somewhat more clearly by proving how each great part of the colonial empire viewed the matter from its own local standpoint.

To refer first to South Africa, already in 1870, and even prior to the outbreak of the Franco-German War, an authoritative voice from the Cape had defined the colonial view that the empire was a necessity.

“In this colony,” said the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, “I cannot think that any desire exists for its transfer to the rule of another power; neither can I think that, with its scanty resources and its divided population, it would desire to stand alone.”*

It was the internal, and even more the external, position of our people in South Africa which seemed to make necessary their continued union with ourselves. In both aspects they were incapable of standing by themselves. “The South African colonies,” as was justly said at that date, “are permeated and surrounded by hosts of savages armed with the weapons of civilized men.”† As for the white population, it counted, all told, 450,000 persons, of which no less than two-thirds were Dutch, a race increasingly

* Speech of the Governor, Sir P. Wodehouse, January 25, 1870.

† *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1879, article “South Africa,” p. 539.

hostile to British aspirations in that quarter. That "the Boers resent our interference, and would gladly repudiate our authority," * was already well known. Thus threatened by a race of the European stock, our handful of settlers could not possibly entertain the idea of independence.

It was conceivable, no doubt, that they and the Dutch might combine to establish a free united South Africa, but here again the external position would have rendered that policy impracticable on two accounts. In the first place, Germany had already her eyes upon South Africa. A German authority was already strenuously urging his government to occupy Delagoa Bay or St. Lucia on the east coast, and to pour a stream of emigrants into the Transvaal.† The year 1879 may be given as the date when Germany began to march definitely along the road of imperial and colonial expansion:‡ she would not fail to seize any opportunity that might open in South Africa. If so, how long could an independent South Africa stand upright without the assistance of the British navy?

Or, if Germany should elect to stand aloof, there was France who would be ready for a similar enterprise. On either side of Africa she could readily cut off the Cape from any communications with the outer world. On the west she had her strong commanding position in Senegal; on the east, "leaving Great Britain out of consideration," said one of our state papers of that date, "France is the most formidable

* *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1879, article "South Africa," p. 546.

† Von Ernst von Weber, "Vier Jahre in Afrika, 1871-75;" Zwei Bände, Leipzig, 1878.

‡ "Annual Register," 1879, p. 169-170.

power in the Indian Ocean."* She had Réunion; Ste Marie de Madagascar, Nossibé, and Mayotte, in the Mozambique Channel; her posts in India; Oboc and other minor settlements in the Red Sea. On either side of Africa she could cut the connection of an independent South Africa with the outer world.

No wonder that, in all these circumstances, the Cape Parliament appointed a local committee to deal with the subject of defences to be undertaken in common with the home government.

With regard to another great department of the empire, Canada also received about this time what Lord Dufferin, her governor-general, termed, with fine rhetoric, "the afflatus of a more imperial inspiration." The true cause of this impulse came, here as elsewhere, from without, in this case from the vast and threatening expansion of the United States across the border. It was in 1869 that the first railroad had united the Atlantic and the Pacific; the Western States had long been filling up rapidly; their population was expanding, in spite of the Civil War, with amazing increment, and Canada felt herself compromised and endangered by the comparison. These fears had some practical ground. American politicians conceived that they had right to complain of the sympathies evinced by Canadians during the progress of the American Civil War; by consequence, as a step to mark their displeasure, they repealed in 1866 the treaty of trade reciprocity which Canada had enjoyed for some time.

"The real cause of its repeal was the prejudice in the Northern States against Canada on account of its supposed sympathy for the confederate states during

* Third and Final Report of Royal Commission on Defence, dated July, 1882, para. 16.

the Secession War. A large body of men in the north believed that the repeal of the treaty would sooner or later force Canada to join the republic; and a bill was actually introduced in the house of representatives providing for her admission."*

This was the first of a long series of measures taken by the United States which resulted in further pressure on Canada.

It was in such circumstances as these that Canada decided, with the cordial approval of England, to adopt the federation of her provinces into one dominion as speedily as possible.

"The neighbourhood of the great American Republic was a powerful lever to the federation of British North America; the formation of the dominion was really the alternative to the provinces being absorbed piecemeal in the United States; and the instinct of self-preservation led here as elsewhere to union and strength."†

In a third great division of our dominions, in Australasia, a similar movement for the integration of the empire was witnessed about the same time. It was due to the awakening sense of the far-reaching nature of modern armaments. Till now she had been almost isolated; but in course of time the current of hostile international forces had attained her shores as well.

"Prior to 1878 little had been done to modernize the external defences of the empire. While the fortresses at home and abroad had been to a great extent reconstructed and rearmed, the coaling stations were

* Sir John Bourinot, "Canada under British Rule, 1760-1900," p. 303.

† Sir George Lewis, "On the Government of Dependencies," Introduction, dated 1891, written by C. P. Lucas, of the Colonial Office, p. xxxv.

for the most part undefended, or retained obsolete smooth-bores and methods of defence dating back to the beginning of the century. At the same time, vast colonial progress had been made; which, while it added strength and prosperity to the empire, at the same time greatly increased its vulnerability.*

Australasia had grown rich, and was thus liable to the novel methods of attack. What more natural than that her practical statesmen should look more anxiously than before to drawing closer their ties with the mother country in a scheme of common defence.

The first important step taken in execution of these new ideas was the report of Sir W. Jervois on the defences of the Australasian colonies in 1879.† This was followed by the recommendations of the Sydney Commission of 1881, and then again by the exhaustive report of the Royal Commission, under the presidency of Lord Carnarvon, in 1882.

In order to make good the fact that the Australasian colonies did actually appreciate and act upon the necessities of the new time, the report of Lord Carnarvon's Commission above mentioned is worth quoting—

“On the general question of naval defence, we were informed that the value of the union between the mother country and the colonies, and the importance of strengthening it, and of each party bearing its share of the common task, is fully appreciated in Australia.” ‡

* Speech of British Colonial Secretary, Sir Henry Holland, April 4, 1887.

† “Report on Colonial Defences,” by Lieutenant-General Sir W. Drummond Jervois, dated November 29, 1879.

‡ “Second Report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Defence of British Possessions and Commerce Abroad,” part ii., dated March 23, 1882.

Such was the profound change that, during the decade in question, stirred those remotest parts of the empire with the impulse towards a closer and more efficient co-operation.

Fourthly and lastly, the same ominous change in the affairs of men which had warned our people to be up and doing in South Africa, Canada, and Australasia, operated with an even more irresistible compulsion upon our Indian world. The cause was the singular progress of Russia, since her reverse in the Crimean War. As was correctly said in 1874, "of late the government of the Czar had not been popular in our country. The advance of the Russian power in Asia had created fears and jealousies." *

So long ago as 1836 Sir John M'Neill, then our minister in Persia, in a pamphlet entitled "Progress of Russia in the East," had pointed out that, since the latter part of the eighteenth century, Russia had advanced a thousand miles towards India. He predicted that Russia's progress in the future would be not less remarkable, and that in a generation or thereabouts her forces would meet our garrisons on the Indian border. That prophecy seemed every day more likely to be realized at an early date, now that Russia had long ago shaken off the comparative quiescence which marked the close of the Crimean struggle.

In 1870, then, our ministers, both at St. Petersburg and Teheran, had occasion to point to the danger which already, from across the deserts, threatened Merv and Herat. But these warnings seemed at that date to refer only to some dim and distant future. However, they came true speedily enough. It was the expedition to Khiva in 1873 which testified how

* "Annual Register," 1874, p. 20.

easily Russia could move her columns from Orenburg and Tashkend to the Oxus, a distance greater than from Merv to the Caspian, and which roused genuine emotion at Calcutta and in London. Shortly afterwards, Shere Ali, of Afghanistan, took alarm at the Muscovites' continued advance towards his frontier, and besought our assistance to arrest the further progress of their arms. We did so, and duly received a comfortable assurance from Prince Gortchakoff, of the usual kind, to the effect that "the orders of the emperor that no expedition shall be undertaken have been given in peremptory terms."* Needless to say, the Russians continued to adopt such aggressive measures, without the slightest reference to their own pledge, that, in the spring of 1875, our ministry warned Count Schouvaloff in the plainest language that "an advance of British troops westward was probable in the event of any Russian movement tending to the occupation of Merv."† Such language revealed a new danger to the entire British empire, and seemed to constitute another distinct stage in the great access of European pressure upon us which was in process at this date.

Nevertheless, such bold and even threatening language did not appear to deter the Russians very long. As time passed, our Ministry had to declare, in 1878, that—

"In spite of the direct engagement recorded in Prince Gortchakoff's memorandum of 1875, as to the non-extension of Russian territory, the Russian government increased rather than relaxed its activity

* Parliamentary Papers, Central Asia, No. I. of 1878, p. 12. This assurance was given March 24, 1874.

† Ibid., Central Asia, No. I., 1878, p. 24.

in the Turcoman country and on the Oxus. . . . In short, so far from the Russian government adhering to its pledges of 1875, the past three years have been marked by a considerable increase of territory, by secret missions of Russian agents, both in the Turcoman country and in Western Afghanistan, and finally by the present military movements."*

It was this alarm regarding Russia which was now driving us to secure in Afghanistan what Lord Beaconsfield described as a "scientific frontier," and which presently led us into the Afghan War of 1878. That war, as was said at the time, was "a war with Russia rather than with the Afghans;"† and was waged, according to Lord Beaconsfield, with the object of making "arrangements by which . . . all anxiety respecting the North-Western Frontier of India will be removed."‡

Perhaps it has now been proved sufficiently that, from about the year 1870 onwards, a vast expansion in the organized military resources of the leading European powers became obvious to ourselves and to the peoples of our empire. Our Indian administrators felt the neighbourhood of the ever-advancing Russians. Australasia, divided into many states, became cognisant of her own weakness. Our South African fellow-subjects grew to know the hostility of the Dutch and the youthful ambitions of Germany. Canada saw how vigorous and aspiring a republic lay immediately across her border. We in our island understood that across our narrow strait were ranged the stupendous hosts of our immemorial rivals of the

* Parliamentary Papers, Central Asia, No. I., 1878, p. 146.

† *Quarterly Review*, vol. 147, p. 260; art. "Russia and the Indian Frontier."

‡ Guildhall speech, 1878.

European world. To fortify; to arm; to co-ordinate schemes of defence or of counter-attack, if need be; to render the empire an impregnable fortress, or rather to create and organize an empire;—all this presented itself as the imperative necessity of the sombre and portentous time.

It was not likely that, as the years proceeded, and as the armaments and ambitions of Europe made progress, this consolidation of the empire should relax. This was clearly demonstrated in 1887 on the occasion of the assembly of the Colonial Conference of that year. Lord Salisbury, in opening the proceedings, predicted that it would be "the parent of a long progeniture." As for imperial federation, the minister said that was a sentimental aspiration, hazy now, but like the nebulous matter which in course of ages would cool down and condense into material form. But he thought that

"the *Kriegsverein*, the union for military purposes, the union for purposes of mutual defence, is the real and most important business upon which you will be engaged. . . . Our interests are common," he proceeded to say, in a passage which might serve as the text of this chapter. "Supposing that the colonies were not part of the empire; supposing that the colonies were independent, do you think they would be safe? I know that twenty or thirty years ago it was thought that they would be safe; that their distance from Europe would make them practically safe, and that their only risk was being embroiled in quarrels in which the mother country might have engaged. But matters have perhaps changed and are changing. I am very far from suspecting or believing that the rulers of the great countries of Europe are likely to commit any act of violence upon distant territories; but what I cannot close my eyes to is that the facilities for such action have enormously increased in recent years. The great increase

in the naval power of the countries of Europe, the enormous increase in the means of communication, place the colonies so much nearer Europe. The improvements of modern science, and especially of telegraphic science, aid the concentration of force upon a single point. All these things have brought the distant lands which belong to the empire in various parts of the world within the sphere of possible aggression. Do not so misinterpret my words as to imagine that I conceive any aggression likely or probable on the part of those who wield power in Europe; but the circumstances in which we live, and the tendencies of human nature as we know it in all times of history, teach us that where there is liability to attack and defencelessness, attack will come. The English colonies comprise some of the fairest and most desirable portions of the earth's surface. The desire for foreign and colonial possessions is increasing among the nations of Europe. The power of concentrating military and naval force is increasing under the influence of scientific progress. Put all these things together, and you will see that the colonies have a very real and genuine interest in the shield which their imperial connection throws over them, and that they have a ground for joining with us in making the defence of the empire effective, a ground which is not purely sentimental, which does not rest merely upon their attachment to this country, but which is based on the most solid and reasonable foundations of self-interest and security."*

In order to pursue the same thought more closely up to the present day, there may be cited the proceedings of the next great Colonial Conference, assembled on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of 1897. This time it was Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, who presided and delivered the introductory address.

* "Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 1887," vol. i. pp. 5, 6; Speech of Marquis of Salisbury, April 4, 1887, Parliamentary Paper, c. 5091.

“In the very first rank,” he said, “must of necessity come the question of imperial defence.” Then he proceeded upon the very same lines as Lord Salisbury, but with more explicitness. “Look at the condition of the colonies. Assume that these colonies were separated from the mother country. What would be the position of the great Dominion of Canada? The Dominion of Canada is bordered for 3000 miles by a most powerful neighbour, whose potentialities are infinitely greater than her actual resources. She comes into conflict in regard to the most important interests with the rising power of Japan, and even in regard to some of her interests with the great empire of Russia. . . . If Canada had not behind her to-day, and does not continue to have behind her, this great military and naval power of Great Britain, she would have to make concessions to her neighbours, and to accept views which might be extremely distasteful to her in order to remain permanently on good terms with them. Look at Australia, again. We find the same thing. The interests of Australia have already on more than one occasion threatened to come into conflict with those of the two greatest military nations of the continent, and military nations, let me add, who also possess each of them a very large, one of them an enormous, fleet. There may be also questions of difficulty arising with Eastern nations, with Japan, or even with China, and under those circumstances the Australian Colonies are in precisely the same position as the Dominion of Canada. In South Africa, in addition to the ambitions of foreign countries, our colonies there have domestic rivals who are heavily armed, prepared both for offence and defence; and again I say, nothing could be more suicidal or more fatal than for any of those great groups of colonies either to separate themselves in the present stage from the protecting forces of the mother country, or to neglect themselves to take their fair share in those protective resources.”*

* “Proceedings of a Conference between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Premiers of the Self-governing Colonies, June and July, 1897,” Parliamentary Paper, c. 8596, pp. 5, 6.

The last important conference assembled since that date to discuss imperial affairs met on the occasion of the coronation of King Edward VII. in 1902. The proceedings of the statesmen who then held counsel together marked something of an epoch in our imperial history. The argument has hitherto been that England first acquired the territory of her colonies in order to anticipate the designs of hostile European powers. As these colonies grew up to manhood they were protected by our arms. A time came in the middle of the nineteenth century when the most powerful of them seemed competent to stand alone in mature independence. Then, in the 'seventies, the forces of the outer world proved too strong and threatening, so that they and the mother country found it desirable to consolidate their relationship. But if, in this new development, the mother country was to undertake the whole, or almost the whole, burden of defence, as before, that obligation might now involve her further than she might be able or willing to go. For, first, the colonies, being so much enlarged, would be proportionately expensive to defend properly; and next, the original object of the mother country having been attained, namely to plant those territories with colonies of the Anglo-Saxon stock as a bulwark against the foreigner, why should she now exhaust herself in defending those who might in some degree protect themselves?

There was a third cause for the unfolding of this new aspect of affairs. Side by side with the renewed imperial feeling between ourselves and our colonies since 1870 or thereabouts, there had been in progress a vast increase in the actual extension of the empire. There were Egypt and the Soudan, West Africa, East

Africa, new acquisitions in South Africa, Burma and other regions of the tropical or semi-tropical world. All this necessarily laid a direct and enormous responsibility additionally upon the shoulders of Britain. Accordingly, it was becoming increasingly difficult for her to provide for the requirements of the self-governing colonies as well as for the safety and order of these new territories.

The outcome of these grave considerations was necessarily that our statesmen should explain the situation frankly to the colonial premiers. This was done at the conference of 1902. On that occasion Mr. Chamberlain could point, indeed, to much of signal merit that the colonies had already accomplished for us, more especially in the recent South African War.

“We have had,” he said, “within the last few years, a most splendid evidence of the results of a voluntary union without any formal obligations, in the great crisis of the war through which we have now happily passed. The action of the self-governing colonies in the time of danger of the motherland has produced here a deep and a lasting impression. We are profoundly grateful to you for what you have done. It has created a sense of reciprocal obligation. It has brought home to all of us the essential unity of the sentiment which unites us, and which pervades all parts of His Majesty’s dominions.” *

So much for eulogy and retrospect. And then he struck a deeper note and a more resounding string. All this participation in the African War was a spasmodic and unorganized effort, after all.

“Gentlemen,” he continued, “we do want your aid. We do require your assistance in the administration

* Colonial Conference, 1902 ; Parliamentary Paper, cd. 1299, p. 3 ; speech of Mr. Chamberlain.

of the vast empire which is yours as well as ours. The weary Titan staggers under the too vast orb of its fate. We have borne the burden many years. We think it is time that our children should assist us to support it. If you are prepared at any time to take any share, any proportionate share, in the burdens of the empire, we are prepared to meet you with any proposal for giving to you a corresponding voice in the policy of the empire."*

The minister proceeded to show that, excluding extraordinary war expenses, the normal naval and military expenditure of the United Kingdom involved an outlay per head of the population of over twenty-nine shillings per annum. In Canada the same items involved an expenditure of only two shillings per head—about one-fifteenth of that incurred here. In Australia the corresponding figure was something over three shillings, and in South Africa something under three shillings.

"Now, no one," he proceeded to say in memorable words, "will pretend that this is a fair distribution of the burdens of empire. No one will believe that the United Kingdom can, for all time, make this inordinate sacrifice . . . now that the colonies are rich and powerful, that every day they are growing by leaps and bounds, it is inconsistent with their position—inconsistent with their dignity as nations—that they should leave the mother country to bear the whole, or almost the whole, of the expense."†

How clearly, with almost scientific precision, does the great force, which has made and moulded the empire, stand revealed in its actual operation by the quotations cited above! The empire is to be strengthened by the method of some common council

* Colonial Conference, 1902 ; Parliamentary Paper, cd. 1299, p. 4 ; speech of Mr. Chamberlain.

† Ibid., p. 5.

where the voice of the principal parties concerned is to be expressed. This measure is contemplated by the statesmen of the United Kingdom as a necessary result of the contributions which the colonies are to make to the common defence. This mutual system of defence is, in its turn, the result of the vast and ominous growth of foreign armaments. Such is the root from which all these high deliberations, issuing often in practical action, have sprung.

Hitherto this chapter has been confined to pointing out how clear a connection can be traced, from about 1870 up to the present time, between the growth of European ambitions and the consolidation of the empire. It was on account of the new armaments and the new aspirations of Russia, Germany, and France, that the ties already existing between ourselves and our colonists were drawn materially closer. But this was not all. During these years the empire was not only given more coherence, but it was also vastly extended, owing to the same cause. If the old parts were compelled into union, new parts were added. These additions to our imperial dominions were made by us for the same reason, that is to say, in order to anticipate danger from without.

The vast annexations made during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century may be analyzed mainly into three parts. Some were acquired really at the instance of our colonies, eager to protect themselves against European designs. Such would be our extensions in the Pacific. The next class consists of annexations directly effected by ourselves, in order to avert dangers from some threatened part of our complex domain. To this class would belong

the annexation of Burma. The third class comprises annexations of some territory already being opened up by the energies of our men of business, but which some European power was eager to possess, and whence she would exclude our commerce, more or less completely, unless our government stepped in and forestalled that project by a definite act of annexation. Of such would be the case of East Africa. These observations can be fortified by a reference to the facts in each case.

Perhaps the most striking case of annexations forced upon us by the action of our colonies, who desired to preserve themselves against foreign aggression, is to be found in the Pacific. A few years prior to 1870, a rumour began to spread among the Australian colonies that the United States intended to adopt an active policy in that region and contemplated the annexation of Fiji.* Our ministry, however, acting on the political ideas then current, declared, in 1869, that there would be "more disadvantage in Great Britain taking the responsibility of the government of Fiji than in the risk of the United States assuming the Protectorate." In reply, the Australasian Colonies, next year at an inter-colonial conference, unanimously called for British annexation. Eventually the government yielded to these representations, and in 1874 the islands were duly annexed, under the compelling force of foreign rivalry.

About the same time, and in the same region, was mooted the question of the annexation of New Guinea in whole or in part. It was considered, however, at

* Cf. H. E. Egerton, "A Short History of British Colonial Policy," p. 396.

that date, that it was very unlikely that any foreign power would wish to obtain possession of it.† But, as time passed, this opinion appeared of even more doubtful validity, and there were continual rumours of contemplated foreign occupation. Suddenly, in 1883, by a startling innovation, the government of Queensland took formal possession of it in our name, "to prevent foreign powers taking possession of New Guinea." Our government naturally questioned such a course. But at an intercolonial conference of that year, the following memorable resolution was passed, constituting in itself almost an epoch in colonial history:—"The further acquisition of dominion in the Pacific, south of the Equator, by any foreign power, would be highly detrimental to the safety and well-being of the British possessions in Australasia, and injurious to the interests of the empire." Such was the Monroe doctrine of the southern continent. While matters stood thus between the colonies and ourselves, the appearance of Prince Bismarck decided the matter. In 1884 he stated his determination to annex the north of New Guinea. This impelled us to annex our southern portion. The designs of Germany in New Guinea had thus precisely the same effect as those of the United States in the case of Fiji.

Here, then, in the Pacific, is a clear and unmistakable example of that class of annexations which our colonies have forced upon us. The fear of foreign aggression was, however, the root of the matter, causing our colonies to insist upon, and ourselves to acquiesce in, such action.

* Cf. H. E. Egerton, "A Short History of British Colonial Policy," p. 398; this was in 1873.

The next class of annexations during this period is that of those effected by the home government, not at the instance of any self-governing colony, but more or less directly on its own initiative, in order to protect some existing part of our dominions against the advance of a foreign power. A suitable example is Burma, annexed in 1886.

From about 1870 onwards, our relations with the monarch of that great territory had grown steadily and slowly worse. By painful degrees the position of our resident at Mandalay had become more intolerable. As he himself phrased it, he was "reduced to a mere cipher under the shadow of the Golden Foot." * British subjects were maltreated, British steamers detained by violence, our hill-tribes were claimed as belonging to Burma, and many diplomatic insults were heaped upon us year after year by the umbrella-bearing king. But the British government bore with this insolence. We did not want annexation. Suddenly, we were obliged to annex by the action of France. For it was France who, for several years, had been at the bottom of this trouble.

Ever since the eighteenth century France had cast eyes upon Burma as a means of assailing our position in Hindostan, and throughout the earlier part of the French war of Napoleon, the Calcutta government had been alive to this danger. Now, about 1870, these ambitions had revived. Cambodia, Tonquin, Siam, Annam, were all feeling the influence of French ambitions. "A large party looked on the whole of Indo-China as the future arena of France's glory: it was to be the new India which they were

* Parliamentary Paper; "Correspondence relating to Burma since the accession of King Theebaw in 1878," p. 43; C. 4614.

to call into existence to redress the balance of the old."* Burma was comprised in these projects, and accordingly, a secret treaty was concluded with France, placing Burma under French influence. But this action was disavowed, and the treaty was not ratified in Paris. Nevertheless, the relations of the two countries were, and remained, ominously close.† The fact was that

"the Burmese sovereign, or the Court of Ava, was endeavouring to set up indirectly some European ally within Burma Proper. This ally was to be used as a fulcrum against the long-established British influence in that kingdom, as a lever ultimately for expelling us from British Burma."‡

Accordingly, in course of time, the former project was revived of resuscitating the inchoate French treaty, and a Burmese mission was despatched to Paris.§ This mission aroused the keenest suspicions on the part of our government who, after many protests in Paris, heard, early in 1885, that a commercial treaty had been signed between the parties.||

"The aim of the Burmese was to obtain from the French government such a treaty as would enable them to appeal to France in case of their being involved in difficulties with England, or, in fact, their great object in forming relations with European powers has been, and is, to find means of emancipating

* *Quarterly Review*, January, 1886; p. 234, art. "Burma, Past and Present."

† Cf. "Rapport de M. de Lanessan," Paris, 1885, p. 102.

‡ Sir Richard Temple, speech on Address, House of Commons, 1886; Hansard.

§ Parliamentary Papers, Burma, 1886; "Correspondence relating to Burma," C 4614; p. 105. The date of the Mission was 1883.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 230.

themselves from the special influence and control of the Indian government."*

From that moment events moved with startling rapidity; some three months after the treaty the French consul arrived at Ava, and by midsummer a project was on foot which would have placed the kingdom of Ava at the disposal of a French agency. We took action on the ground that

"as long as the kingdom of Ava occupied an isolated position, the British government could afford to submit to much provocation, but, when the external policy of the Burmese court indicated designs which, if prosecuted with impunity, could only result in the establishing of preponderating foreign influence in the upper valley of the Irrawaddy, it became impossible for H.M. government any longer to view the situation without considerable anxiety." †

Accordingly, Burma was annexed.

The third class of annexations made during the period in question were those effected in order to protect our trade from annihilation by the encroachments of foreign powers. An admirable example would be our East African empire.

"At any time during half a century great Britain might have secured the area which it now holds or claims, and, in fact, a far larger area, without risk of serious opposition; yet not only was the effort never made, but when the opportunity offered it was deliberately rejected. It was only under pressure of foreign competition that the rulers of England reluctantly moved forward, adding with no light heart to a heavily weighted empire." ‡

* Viscount Lyons to Earl Granville, February 4, 1885.

† Lord Randolph Churchill, Secretary of State for India, to the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin; December 31, 1885.

‡ Lucas, "Geography of South and East Africa;" 1904 edition, p. 140.

During the middle of the nineteenth century a considerable trade had sprung up between India and East Africa, and this link was strengthened by the establishment in 1872 of a regular line of steamers to Zanzibar, thanks to the enterprise of Sir William Mackinnon, in some sense the founder of our East African empire. It was to him that the Sultan, five years later, offered to lease for a term of seventy years the sovereignty of Zanzibar. Characteristically, the British government refused to acquiesce in such an arrangement, and nothing was done. Here, as elsewhere, our empire was due to the arrival of a foreign power, in this case Germany, whose subjects presently appeared on the coast and obtained a charter from the German government.* They at once started operations in the interior, and a race at once began between these intruders and ourselves.

The immediate outcome of this rivalry was a delimitation agreement of 1886, by which a line was drawn from a point of the coast north of Zanzibar inland to Lake Victoria Nyanza. All south of that line was to be the German sphere of influence; all north of it was to be British. In order to establish our dominion in this vast region there was finally organized, in 1888, the Imperial British East Africa Company, thanks to the efforts of Sir William Mackinnon and his associates.

It was now the turn of the Germans. No delimitations as regards the western border inland had been arrived at, and accordingly, to the dismay of our people, a German expedition presently started northwards, on the western side of Victoria Nyanza, and made straight for the very sources of the Nile. This

* Dated February 17, 1885.

plan was dropped, it is true, but others of a similar nature were substituted. The design was none other than to establish at the back of the British sphere a German region which should not only tap the sources of the Nile and so render our position in Egypt precarious, but should also comprise Uganda, the only valuable territory between the Nile and the sea.* Thus was it that, in the spring of 1890, the race for Uganda opened, the contestants being the Germans and ourselves. "The German expedition," wrote the *Times* at that date, "will place the greater part of central Africa under German control, and will pave the way for its extension into the Soudan."† But again this danger on the west was happily averted by another agreement, under which Uganda was definitely assigned to ourselves.‡ Such were the steps by which our East African empire was being erected on the impulse of a foreign power.

But it was not yet entirely built. All this had been done by a company, not by the State. The company had utterly exhausted its resources in acquiring the sovereignty of this region much against its will. It now decided to retire from the unequal contest, and it was in these circumstances that the State itself declared protectorates successively over the Zanzibar and Uganda regions. The official reason was the true one.

"In the present condition of African evolution it is hardly possible that Uganda, the natural key to the whole of the Nile Valley, and to the richest parts of Central Africa, and the only country which

* Cf. P. L. Macdermott, "British East Africa," chapter vi.

† *Times*, April 3, 1890.

‡ Anglo-German Agreement of July 1, 1890.

affords any present hope of profitable commerce, should be left unprotected and unnoticed by other powers."*

One of the highest authorities on East Africa—the author of "The Rise of our East African Empire," himself an actor in the events he describes—thus correctly and concisely accounts for our possessions in that region—

"The territories described as British East Africa were acquired through certain private individuals who, forming themselves first into a company under the name of the East African Association, came forward at a moment when the colonial extension of Germany threatened to absorb the whole of East Africa, and, by agreement with the Sultan of Zanzibar, saved to us a portion of that territory which for over two decades had known no European influence save that of Great Britain."†

The purpose of this chapter has been to show that, just as the relaxation of the European pressure upon us in the period from 1815 to 1870 caused a corresponding relaxation of the empire; so, from 1870 to our own day, the steady renewal of that pressure caused a corresponding consolidation and reorganization of the empire. It was shown also that this renewed pressure of Europe had the further effect of causing us to extend our dominions in many additional directions, under the operation of the same law. Thus the empire has been the fruit, neither of chance, nor of rapine, but of a vital and overwhelming necessity.

* Report of Sir Gerald Portal, dated Zanzibar, November 1, 1893.

† Sir F. Lugard, "The Rise of our East African Empire," vol. ii. p. 597.

And thus it lives. It may be said, indeed, that if the empire is thus based on our common determination to defend Anglo-Saxon civilization against assaults from without, such a foundation may be precarious. For, on that hypothesis, the empire would necessarily be dismantled, as soon as the peace of the world is assured. The answer is, however, that when that good time comes for nations to forget their motives for war, we may be well content, since empires are made for men and not men for empires, to disband our force. But, after all, it is very certain that, in spite of Hague conferences and international amenities, there is no horizon on which that Utopian consummation can yet be descried.

Far otherwise. In Europe, since the French Revolution, national spirit has been continually on the advance, and this emotion is ever receiving a fresh stimulus from the outer world. For each continental power, as it gives chase to new conquests, is constantly colliding with its European neighbours at every turn of the hunt. Besides, national spirit has a hold upon us more permanent than even such causes as these can ensure. It is the virile growth of the household of freedom, and freedom is justified of her children. It is the warlike resolve of nations, who have done great things together, to do great things again. From a sentiment it has become a passion, and from a passion we have raised it to a rank among the virtues themselves. So we may well take comfort. Humanity, divided by reason of its very greatness, will not soon find its unity once more.

Nevertheless, as citizens of the world, let us do homage to those who work in the faith of a better

consummation. Above all, as citizens of Britain, let us render our respectful tribute to His Majesty the King, a monarch of whom history will record that he conciliated our enmities and consolidated our friendships, by that genuine love of peace which he shares so profoundly with his subjects, and by that royal diplomacy which is all his own.

CHAPTER IX

AMERICA : RIVAL AND FRIEND

ENOUGH has been said as to the principle which, in the past and in the present, has caused, and is maintaining, the British empire. It remains to inquire into the future, and to observe what perils will threaten us in the coming time. As mentioned at the close of the first chapter, these seem to be two in number, the first of them arising in the direction of the United States. For, if the inhabitants of our empire stand together with the object of preserving their Anglo-Saxon civilization from foreign attack, then clearly they, or at least the Anglo-Saxons among them, may well ask themselves why, by parity of reasoning, they should not amalgamate with the United States rather than with England, on the ground that the former, being in itself an Anglo-Saxon community, and being destined to become also so very powerful a nation, will guarantee them more efficiently in the possession of that civilization which they value and cherish above all price. Conceivably such an inclination upon the part of our self-governing colonies might be found to correspond to an answering aspiration upon the part of the United States.

Such a view as this will, indeed, appear altogether impossible to those who can unreservedly accept

as their guide in American politics the eminent author of "The American Commonwealth."

"To every country in Europe," he says, "foreign relations are a matter of primary importance . . . in the United States nothing of the kind . . . they do not occupy the public mind . . . I mention them now as the traveller did the snakes in Ireland, only to note their absence . . . the people have no lust of conquest, possessing already as much land as they want . . . they have always been extremely jealous of a standing army . . . the desire for annexation is probably feebler than at any preceding epoch . . . they have none of that earth hunger which burns in the great nations of Europe." *

According to the opposite view advanced in this chapter, the United States, so far from being in foreign affairs another Switzerland or another Arcadia, is in reality among the most enterprising and progressive of modern communities, desirous, under the guidance of energetic and aspiring statesmen, of dominating in the arena of the world.

It is true, indeed, that there have always been, at all stages of American history, important men who have deprecated such a policy. At the very inception of the union, Benjamin Franklin was even opposed to the mission of ministers abroad: "a virgin state," he said, with less than his usual good sense, "should preserve the virgin character, and not go abroad suitoring for alliances." † But he was overruled, and Congress, as early as 1781, decided for a department of foreign affairs, on the ground that "the extent and rising power of the United States entitle them to a

* Bryce, "The American Commonwealth," chap. xciv.; third edition.

† Trescot, "Diplomacy of the Revolution," pp. 16, 17.

place among the great potentates of Europe."* In those latter words spoke the true spirit of America.

On the other hand, there might be quoted the words of Washington, incorporated in his farewell address to the people of the United States—

"The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible . . . our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course, . . . it is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." †

Correspondingly, John Adams, the second president, declared that "it would be madness in the United States to think of conquering foreign countries while they have such an immense territory near them uncultivated." ‡ If, however, even these utterances be examined closely, they do not prescribe so negative and stationary a policy as at first sight would appear. After all, Washington does assume that the nation is to be active "in extending our commercial relations," and Adams rests the abstinence from foreign conquest on the emptiness of their existing territory, a condition which has now passed away.

Or again, those who credit the United States with a disinclination towards the outer world may argue with force that, even as regards the internal expansion, "every addition to the territory of the Union, with one exception, Florida, has encountered

* "Secret Journals of Congress," vol. ii. p. 580.

† Washington, "Writings," edited by Sparks, vol. xii. p. 231 : Farewell Address, September 17, 1796.

‡ John Adams, "Works," vol. iii. p. 213 ; diary, dated June 18, 1779.

strenuous opposition from a large portion of the people."* There was at one time a widespread sentiment as to the unwisdom of extending the territory beyond the Rocky Mountains; Jefferson advanced an argument against acquiring even Louisiana from Napoleon; and later on, in 1845, Daniel Webster said the same of Texas, on the score that there would arise "a great Pacific republic, of which San Francisco would be the capital."† Such phrases and sentiments have been repeated by many notable thinkers in every season and at every stage of American expansion, but Englishmen should beware of mistaking these utterances for the voice of the nation, which has almost always emphatically pronounced otherwise.

The thinker who, standing at the cradle and attending at the birth of the American republic, gauged the true and permanent characteristics of that people was Edmund Burke. With the profundity and foresight of genius, he seized upon their essential quality and stated it with a splendour which has never been excelled. Though they were "still in the gristle and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood," he described how already, in 1775—

"Whilst we are looking for them beneath the Arctic Circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes and engaged under the frozen serpent of the South. . . . No sea but what is vexed by their fishermen. No climate but is not witness of their toils." ‡

* John W. Foster, "A Century of American Diplomacy," p. 309.

† Daniel Webster, "Works," vol. v. p. 387.

‡ Burke, "Works," edition of 1801, vol. iii. pp. 45, 46; Speech on Conciliation with America, March 22, 1775.

To those who thought of them as a mild, tractable, arcadian, and hermit people, his reply was that, more than other men, they were possessed with "the fierce spirit of liberty;" that they were fired by "this untractable spirit;" they had grown up, he repeated, with "a fierce spirit of liberty;" and he warned Parliament that, whatever deception members might practice upon themselves, "we cannot falsify, I fear, the pedigree of this fierce people." And finally, he summed up their nature by saying that "in such a people the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible."* This fierceness, this pride, this haughtiness of the American people was the prophetic theme of Edmund Burke.

So far, this chapter has indicated that there is some ground for doubting whether America can safely be credited with that negative retiring spirit often attributed to, and claimed by, her statesmen. But that question can best be definitely answered by recalling the actual facts of American policy. There has evidently been a marvellous natural expansion, but perhaps there has also been statesmanlike design. If so, that conclusion as to the past would warn us to look well to the future.

Their natural growth has undoubtedly been stupendously rapid. Already, in 1774, they seemed to Burke, "rather ancient nations grown to perfection through a long series of fortunate events and a train of successful industry, accumulating wealth in many centuries, than the colonies of yesterday;" † and elsewhere he seemed to foretell the future as well as to

* Burke, "Works," editions of 1801, vol. iii., pp. 49, 54, 57, 66.

† "Works," vol. ii. p. 369; Speech on American taxation.

summarize the past in saying that "your children do not grow faster from infancy to manhood than they spread from families to communities, and from villages to nations."* In 1775 he estimated them at two millions.† "Already they have topped the Appalachian Mountains. From thence they behold before them an immense plain—one vast, rich, level meadow."‡ For the first time their extension westward had been foreseen. A few years passed, and at the outbreak of the French revolution, in 1789, three definite streams of men began to flow in that direction, either through the Mohawk valley into central New York, or across Pennsylvania and down the Ohio into Kentucky, or from Virginia and North Carolina across the Blue Ridge Mountains to the head-waters of the Tennessee. "The building of the West" had begun, which was not to end until the population of two millions in 1774 had risen to eighty millions in our own day, and the area in square miles of that territory from the original 240,000 to the existing figure of 3,568,000 square miles. So much for the automatic increase. But let us inquire whether the aims and aspirations of their statesmen have not hastened and accelerated this growth, and are not now expanding with this bewildering progress.

The existence of a vigorous foreign policy in the United States may be observed under three different aspects. They have secured the eviction of European nations from their vicinity and neighbourhood on the mainland. Next, they have proclaimed the

* "Works," vol. iii. p. 36.

† Ibid., p. 35.

Ibid., p. 63.

Monroe doctrine. Thirdly, after the years of reconstruction necessitated by the Civil War, they have definitely pursued, from about 1880, a policy of expansion in the world outside.

In the first category must be placed, to begin with, the purchase from Napoleon in 1803 of the enormous district known as Louisiana. By Louisiana was understood at that date a region stretching from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains westward, and from the Canadian border southward to the Gulf of Mexico. Then, in 1848, Spanish civilization was bidden to depart in its turn when the United States, after war with Mexico, acquired a gigantic area including Texas, California, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and Utah, with parts of Wyoming and Colorado. It remained to deal with the Russians. About 1823 Russia, then in the flush of her European ascendancy after Waterloo, was making herself felt very sensibly in the American north-west. So much was this the case that it was her conduct which evoked the third principle enunciated in the famous Monroe doctrine of that year: "The occasion has been judged proper for asserting . . . that the American continents . . . are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Powers." In order to secure this object, the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867. Here, then, is assuredly one phase of the vigorous foreign policy pursued, with intervals of intermission, throughout the history of the Union: the Slav and the Latin represented by Russia, France, and Spain, have been bidden to bow and retire before the coming of the Anglo-Saxon. Already, in 1854, the President in his inaugural message could point to the "disquieting

concern of Europe at the territorial expansion of the United States." *

Those who believe that the people of the United States attach "no importance" to foreign relations, have "no lust of conquest" and no "earth-hunger," will be surprised at the following views enunciated on the occasion of the purchase of Alaska by Senator Charles Sumner, who, as chairman of the senate committee on foreign relations, was one of the principal statesmen concerned. One of the reasons of this annexation was that—

"All are looking to the Orient, as in the time of Columbus. . . . To them China and Japan are the Indies. . . . The extension of dominion is calculated to captivate the public mind. . . . The passion for acquisition is strong in the community. . . . With increased size on the map there is increased consciousness of strength. . . . The present treaty is a visible step in the occupation of the whole North American continent. . . . We dismiss one other monarch from the continent . . . one by one they have retired—first France, then Spain, then France again, and now Russia. . . . Another motive to this acquisition may be found in the desire to anticipate imagined schemes or necessities of Great Britain." †

The second aspect of American foreign policy must be associated with the Monroe doctrine. The principles originally laid down were framed in a threefold form, but they may be summarized by the statement that the European powers were informed that they are not to colonize "the American continents," and also are not "to extend their system to

* Presidential message, dated December 4, 1854.

† Extracts from published oration by Senator Charles Sumner, on Alaska Purchase; cf. Hart, "American History, told by Contemporaries," vol. iv. pp. 547-549.

any portion of this hemisphere." This exclusion of European influence from the best portion of the globe and this practical assertion of American supremacy over that region can surely be judged in no other light than as one of the boldest and most sweeping assertions of foreign policy ever issued since the Pope divided the new world.

The third phase of the foreign policy of the United States has been activity beyond the boundaries of the American continent, resulting in war and annexation. It has already been pointed out, in the preceding chapter, that soon after 1870 the powers of Europe began so to reorganize and increase their armaments that a current of alarm penetrated everywhere and changed the politics of the world. The United States, even in her distant seat across the waters, felt that influence and responded to the change in international politics; for about that date there is to be noticed "the reappearance of a vigorous foreign policy. . . . The time was foreshadowed when the quiescence of the years after 1865 would be abandoned for greater activity in foreign affairs."* The epoch may be marked by the negotiation of a treaty in 1878 with Samoa for a coaling station in the Pacific. Still more significant was a tendency "to assume an aggressive policy with regard to the interests of the United States in Central and South America."† Ten years passed, and the tendency of events still ran in the same direction in 1889: "the desire for a vigorous foreign policy, though it jarred with traditions, had spread and become

* "The Cambridge Modern History," vol. vii. pp. 648-649, "The United States."

† *Ibid.*, p. 649.

popular. The reconstruction of the navy had also begun."* This was the movement of which the stages were to be the Venezuelan imbroglio, the annexation of Hawaii, the Spanish War, the conquest of Cuba, and the appropriation of the Philippines, accompanied by an extensive reorganization and increase of the army and by the adoption of a policy of establishing the United States as at least the second naval power in the world.

This imperial progress was heralded and justified by many authoritative voices; but of these perhaps the chief were, on the side of the democrats, Richard Olney, and, on the side of the republicans, President Theodore Roosevelt. The former was Secretary of State in 1895 under President Cleveland, and it was in that capacity that he proclaimed the Olney Doctrine, so called because it was recognized as superseding the more modest pronouncement of Monroe.

"The states of America, south as well as north," said the minister, "by geographical proximity, by natural sympathy, by similarity of governmental constitutions, are friends and allies, commercially and politically, of the United States."

This was presumably to include Canada, but more was to come.

"To-day the United States are practically sovereign on this continent, and their *fiat* is law upon the subjects to which they confine their interposition. Why? . . . It is because, in addition to all other grounds, their infinite resources, combined with their isolated position, render them master of the situation

* "The Cambridge Modern History," vol. vii. p. 663, "The United States."

and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers."

Agricola could hardly have addressed such language to the vanquished Britons as Secretary Olney thus aimed at ourselves and our colonies of North and South America. At a later date, in 1899, the same statesman again emphasized the foreign aspirations and necessities of the United States.

"The United States has come out of its shell, and ceased to be a hermit, . . . and is now asserting itself, not only as one of the great forces of the world, but as a power with very large Asiatic dependencies. . . . Nothing will satisfy us in the future but free access to foreign markets, especially to those markets in the East." *

Such was the language which found a responsive echo among those in whose minds foreign aspirations are supposed to be non-existent.

Upon the Republican side President Roosevelt has dominated all others, and has led the country in enthusiasm for expansion. Many utterances could be quoted : one will suffice:

"Great privileges and great powers are ours. . . . We belong to a young nation, already of giant strength, yet whose present strength is but a forecast of the power that is to come. We stand supreme in a continent, in a hemisphere. East and west we look across the two great oceans towards the larger world-life in which, whether we will or not, we must take an ever-increasing share." †

Could the Emperor Charles V., or Louis XIV., have said more ?

* Hart, "American History, told by Contemporaries," vol. iv. pp. 612-614.

† Speech as Vice-President, on taking the oath of office, March 4, 1901.

In view of these public confessions of almost boundless ideals, coupled with the facts of a vast expansion, it is incumbent to ask ourselves in what direction do they lead. Clearly, the United States have not yet attained their full influence upon international affairs. We must ascertain, accordingly, the methods whereby their statesmen may be able to claim that future preponderance in the world which they appear to contemplate.

The first method is the obvious one of conquest by force. Equipped in the future with a huge fleet and an efficient army, and provided with boundless resources, it is clear that American statesmen, as conquerors, would be formidable enough. Yet, if that project be examined, it will be found that, aspiring as the statesmen of America may be, there will be serious obstacles in the way of their success.

No doubt, conquest within certain limits would be easy enough. They might subdue Mexico, or some of the states of Latin America lying immediately to the south; or else, following on their acquisition of the Philippines, might wrest the Dutch Indies from the enfeebled hands of Holland, or annex a portion of the Chinese empire. But these would be petty results, in no way entitling them to a dominant position in the world. Nothing serious in the way of conquest can be achieved in these days that does not bring the aggressor within range of the armaments and within the scope of the rival pretensions of some European power, or at any rate of some power so warlike and munitioned as Japan or the South American States. A contest with these would be a very different affair from the subjugation of Hawaii or the Philippines, and it is exceedingly doubtful

whether the American people, lovers of expansion and of a spirited foreign policy as they are undoubtedly, would be willing to embark upon such costly and exhausting enterprises. For they would have no motive of necessity. According to the argument of this book, it is necessity which has forced us to acquire an empire, and has primed us to endure such incalculable sacrifices for that end. We have known that we should be doomed if we suffered the new world to pass wholly into hostile hands. But there is no such imperative need before the United States, first, because so much of the outer world is under the control of a friendly England; and next, because the union is itself of such gigantic strength at home. This is the fundamental reason why it is improbable that the people of the United States, though evidently desirous of occupying the premier place among the nations, will permit their statesmen to attain that end by a career of world-wide conquest. There are other ways.

The other method by which the United States could acquire the headship of the world would be to absorb the British empire, or at any rate the Anglo-Saxon portions of it. That this is not a visionary idea is proved by the fact that for the last two years it has been a main topic of our most practical statesmen. Mr. Chamberlain evidently implies that Canada may leave us for the United States, unless we do a great deal more for Canada than we do at present. His whole argument for a tax on food, from which Canada shall be exempt but not the Americans, rests on the hypothesis that Canada may quit the empire unless some such additional boon is granted to her by England. If Canada left us,

Australia might well go too, and thus the United States would in course of time ascend to the supremacy of the world.

During the comparatively brief course of their history, the Americans have endeavoured to reduce Canada both by force of arms and by the stress of commercial diplomacy. For, in the view of many, as John Adams said as long ago as 1778, "So long as Great Britain shall have Canada and Nova Scotia . . . so long will Great Britain be the enemy of the United States, let her disguise it as much as she will."* Even Mr. Goldwin Smith, who, so late as 1891, could prophesy that "the American people have no craving for more territory," and that hardly any Americans desire to coerce Canada into the union, yet makes the significant admission, after an experience of twenty years, that "the Americans in general are not insensible, perhaps they are more sensible than they sometimes affect to be, of the advantages and the accession of greatness which would accrue to the Republic by the entrance of Canada into the Union."† It is in this manner, rather than by a warlike programme, that American statesmen could satisfy the world-wide aspirations which they assure us to be theirs; and therefore it is desirable to review the arguments which may decide Canada to refuse or to assent to such a process of absorption.

On the one hand, it has been advanced as a certain argument in favour of amalgamation with

* John Adams to Samuel Adams, July 2, 1778; "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution," vol. ii. p. 667.

† Goldwin Smith, "Canada and the Canadian Question," pp. 275-276.

the United States that the security and wealth of Canada would thereby be decidedly increased. It has been pointed out that the connection with England imposes on the Dominion "the heavy weight of a constant liability to entanglements in the quarrels of England all over the world, with which Canada has nothing to do, and about which nothing is known by her people."* A Canadian of Assiniboia or Saskatchewan may feel indisposed for an entangling association with those who may have to fight tomorrow among the Afghan mountains or in the Pechili Gulf.

Next, it may be argued on similar lines that the United States is far stronger than the United Kingdom in point of numbers and in its illimitable natural resources available for war. Therefore it would be prudent for Canada to ally herself with the more powerful rather than with the weaker and more endangered of these two states. Lastly, absolute free communication with the American market would follow as a result of political amalgamation, and would benefit Canada, since the near market must be the best, not only on account of the difference in freights, but on account of the perishable nature of so many goods, such as fruits, fish, vegetables, poultry, and other produce.

"It can safely be said that all the natural interests in Canada, the farming interest, which is much the greatest of all, the lumber interest, the mining interest, and the shipping interest, would vote for a measure which would admit them freely to the American market. On the other side are only the protected manufacturers." †

* Goldwin Smith, "Canada and the Canadian Question, p. 249.

† Ibid., p. 292.

Such are the arguments which have been, and may be, advanced to induce Canada to quit the British empire and to seek amalgamation with the United States. Important as those considerations are, there are others of more weight upon the other side.

First, then, to the argument that Canada should escape from the entangling alliance of Britain, it may be replied that such an alliance is not entangling at all. To those who ask what concern Canada has in Afghanistan or China the answer is, very possibly none; if none, Canada is under no obligation to help Britain. The mother country has waged wars in Afghanistan and China in which Canada, though a part of the empire, has had no share at all. On the free principles of the empire, it is open to Canada to help or to abstain.

As regards the next argument that Canada should join the United States and thus range herself with an Anglo-Saxon power more strong than Britain, the answer is that the United States at present are not more powerful than Britain, if navies be compared, and it is the defence of a powerful navy which is the chief requisite of Canada. Besides, some may question whether the United States will always retain their present nature. As an American authority has said—

“The character of the immigrants has changed. Whereas formerly the larger proportion of them were of the best races of Western Europe, at the present time that kind of immigration has practically ceased; and the country is receiving annually hundreds of thousands of the lower classes of South-Eastern Europe, a more ignorant and turbulent element which is not easily assimilated.”*

* Professor H. C. Emery, of Yale University, “Cambridge Modern History,” vol. vii. chap. xxii. p. 722.

Although the statement that the immigration has ceased from the best races of Western Europe is not quite accurate, yet the figures of immigration show that for the ten years 1894 to 1903 something over 4,000,000 immigrants entered the United States, of whom only 550,000 came from the United Kingdom. The rest arrived from Austria Hungary, Italy, Scandinavia, Germany, France, Russia, and Finland. If this process continues, as it appears to be doing in an ever-increasing degree, the Anglo-Saxon colonies of the empire may reflect that the United States is becoming of so uncertain a composition that it might perhaps be ill-advised for them to cast in their fortunes with such a community. They might easily find that, having left the empire, they have exchanged freedom for a less easy connection.

But perhaps the main reason of all why Canada will not be disposed to join the United States is her intense pride and belief in her own destinies. As Sir Wilfrid Laurier, one of the most accomplished statesmen produced by the new world during the three centuries of its existence, said in 1900: "I want to build a nation that will be the foremost among the great powers of the world." One who has been honoured with the hospitality and converse of that minister and his fellow-statesmen, and who has travelled in that dominion from Quebec to the Pacific, may perhaps be pardoned the observation that Canada echoes the sentiment of Sir Wilfrid Laurier from sea to sea. Only, may those high and certain fortunes be ever associated with the motherland.

So far this chapter has arrived at the three conclusions—that the United States is a highly aspiring power; that if its future career is to be one of

conquest, those conquests will scarcely be of a very extensive character; and lastly, that if it aims, in the alternative, at absorbing Canada, and so at the disruption of our empire, its efforts will meet with many obstacles more formidable than may be supposed. A third course lies before the United States. Let us hope that it is in this latter direction that those statesmen will find scope for their undoubted aspirations and splendid abilities.

The broad and general argument of these pages has been that England has organized an empire in order to preserve the balance of power in the world. Thus it has come about that an equilibrium has been, in normal times, fairly established. On the one hand, at any given moment, are ranged ourselves and any allies, such as Japan, whom the circumstances of the moment may furnish to us; while, on the other, in opposition, stands any would-be conqueror, such as Russia or Germany, with its allies. It is clear, therefore, that if any new power, allied with neither of these two forces and of the immense capacities of the United States, were to step forward and throw its weight into either side of that equilibrium, it is that power which would largely control the world. This, then, is the direction in which the policy of the United States, if wisely conducted, will move in the future, and indeed is already moving in the Far East, where, as time proceeds, she will be seen ever more clearly to hold the scales. We may put aside as visionary the schemes of an absolute Anglo-American reunion, so often advocated by sincere and earnest men. But, as against this, it may be fairly hoped that, if reason and justice animate our statesmen as well as those of America, the two nations may

constantly be on the same side in the great international issues that lie indubitably before us.

In the very darkest hour of English history, when the provisional articles of the treaty which was to register the disruption of the empire had been signed at Paris, the House of Commons passed a resolution which may be not unjustly described as one of the best and wisest in its long history. In that season of eclipse and earthquake, when those who had sprung from England had revolted from us and had allied with the bitterest of our enemies, our legislature placed on record that "we most ardently wish that religion, language, interests, and affection may yet prove the bond of permanent union between the two countries." * That aspiration must have been as hard for them to frame in that season of defeat and bitterness as it should be easy for us to endorse and forward it. For we can see before us the advent of a time when Burke's noble prophecy should be not impossible of fulfilment, a time when, in spite of the inevitable rivalries of two great nations, "the Americans will have no interest contrary to the grandeur and glory of England," and when "the more they multiply the more Friends we will have." †

* Address of Commons of Great Britain, December 5, 1782; the provisional articles of the treaty of Paris had been signed on November 30, 1782.

† Burke, "Works," vol. iii. p. 124, edition of 1801; Speech on Conciliation with America, March 22, 1775.

CHAPTER X

THE CASE OF THE YELLOW PERIL

THE second danger which, as was indicated at the close of the first chapter, may jeopardize the empire, is the Yellow Peril.

It so happened that, the other day, as I chanced to be spending an hour on that famous Peak which overlooks Hongkong harbour, I suddenly encountered Ah Hok. It appeared that he was passing through on his way to Canton, and so to his native province, after his lengthy residence in the West. When in Europe, the circumstances of his life and his acquaintance with our language had induced him to take pupils anxious to acquire some knowledge of the Four Books and the Five Classics of China. Accordingly, I greeted him with that respect which their sages unanimously enjoin upon a learner towards a teacher; while he, on his side, acknowledged my salutation with that admirable courtesy in which the Chinese claim to excel us "outer barbarians."

Taken somewhat aback, I could think of nothing better than to ask him if he did not admire the scene—Hongkong harbour far down below us all crowded with shipping, the numberless islands, and beyond, the stern forbidding promontories of Kwang-Tung. He assented cordially enough, for, in spite of a common opinion, the inhabitants of the Flowery

Land are lovers of natural beauty ; but he also took occasion to confess, with a certain innuendo, that at that moment he happened to be asking himself by what right we English had established ourselves in Hongkong. This led, very naturally, into a more general discussion, in which I advanced the view, now developed in this volume, that our empire was due to the necessity of forestalling our European rivals. Ah Hok, a master of our literature and politics, listened, and at last replied. The point and pith of the discourse of a cultivated Chinaman are inimitable, so I shall not exactly reproduce either, but shall confine myself to my own account.

“I can well believe,” Ah Hok began by saying, “that the cause and character of the British empire are such as you describe ; and you have, no doubt, accounted for the empire in referring to the pressure of your European enemies.

“But, having thus granted your argument and accepted your conclusion, I must proceed to point out in how grave an issue of public morals you are at once involved. You assert that Britain is justified in appropriating large areas of the earth’s surface because her European enemies are doing the same. That is no justification in the eyes of us, the possessors. We care nothing for your domestic broils in another continent. You plead your strategic requirements. Why should our farms be turned into your fortresses? Because you play in the bloody blind man’s buff of Christendom, that does not authorize your trespass here.

“Your argument is that, since Holland has seized the Dutch Indies, and America the Philippines ; since Russia has torn Manchuria and the Amoor provinces

from us, and France has been equally successful in Indo-China; since Germany has clutched Kiao-Chau with her mailed fist, therefore England has had to act like them. You must build up a dyke, you say, against the flood tide of your European rivals. Who gave you our ground to build on? The materials which you handle as the mere mortar for your battlements are the living rights of our people. You consider our property with as much indifference as two hostile regiments racing for a position consider the crops over which they run. But Europe has a grand excuse for all her license. She says that she is endowing us Asiatics, forsooth, with her superior civilization. I should like to inquire into that specious title, and into the relative merits of China and Christendom.

“It must certainly be admitted that the people of your continent have enjoyed every opportunity of civilization. Europe, being too materialistic ever to produce any religion of her own, procured hers from Asia; for it was to the bosom of an Asiatic virgin that He was entrusted Whom you identify with the salvation of the world. He was never weary of enforcing upon His followers the transcendent merits of tenderness towards others, of peace on earth and goodwill among men; and thus Europeans might well be expected to excel all other peoples in the mildness of their charity, in the beauty of their holiness, and in their abhorrence of the criminal arts of war. By way of comment, look down, dear sir, upon Hongkong honeycombed with fortresses, and crammed at this moment with an ample selection of the warships of the world.

“Europe started with another advantage. About

the time that she began to accept Christianity, Rome organized her empire. It stretched from Scotland to Syria, embracing the civilized world of the West. An army, astonishingly small in numbers, guarded its frontiers. Within, there was justice and peace. Rome worked for mankind. Her most characteristic sovereigns, such as Trajan and the Antonines, were as true and disinterested servants of the human family as ever existed. Beneath and around them stood a host of others inspired similarly, whose names history has ignored. But the proof that they lived is the Roman empire, law and order personified.

“There was even a third advantage which, as your writers tell us, Europe possessed at that time: I mean the memory of Athens and the lesson of an immortal art. Athenians had claimed that they were lovers of the beautiful yet simple in their tastes, and that they cultivated the mind without loss of manliness. For they had seen the secret and subtle affiliation of goodness and beauty. They thought that a great national art is only founded upon a great national character. They summarized all by saying that Athens is the school of Hellas. They were too modest. She was the school of the world.

“Thus Europe, at her start, had everything requisite for a consummate civilization. Rome had endowed her with the gift of civil government; Athens with art; and Jerusalem with religion: the love of man, the love of nature, and the love of God.

“However, the prospect that these divers elements would work together for the common benefit of humanity was destined to be rudely shattered. In due course, those whom you justly call the barbarians swarmed over the Roman boundaries and filled

Europe. These barbarians, needless to say, were your direct ancestors. Then ensued for six centuries a period from which history itself recoils in horror as before a cataract of blood. The policy of Rome, the art of Athens, perished; Christianity was so defaced and mutilated that it became a superstition. For whatever these savages handled they degraded utterly or entirely destroyed. But this was a mere casual result of their brutality compared with the active virulence of their vice. The records of that vast period of time positively teem with the incredible and exhaustless catalogue of their criminality. Man fell below the beast, and raged against his own species.

“The consequence of all this was that society dissolved into its elements, or, more plainly, every one began to look after himself alone. Every eagle perched upon his own eyrie; every strong man built his own castle for himself. But the measure of security thus attained by a few seemed only to add to the common misery; and each fortress became a nest of robbers, who swooped on the surrounding pastures at their own sweet will. Thus the partial remedy seemed worse than the disease, and, as the centuries proceeded, Europe grew hopelessly entangled in the vicious circle of her own wickedness.

“At last, in their despair, men began to bestir themselves, and bethought them of the good old days of the Romans, when the world was at peace. At this juncture the Popes saw their opportunity, and suggested that all power should be entrusted to themselves, as if it were enough to sit upon the tomb of the Cæsars to be as strong as they. And to outvie even the Cæsars, they claimed that the keys of heaven and

hell were in their hands. To this pretension to universal empire there was one objection, however. Our Dalai Lama could rule Thibet: the Dalai Lama of Europe could not manage its own Romagna, much less the most turbulent races in the world. Therefore, after ages of conflict and wars innumerable fomented between the civil and spiritual powers, the world laid its veto upon that ambitious project. But not before the Papacy had used all the arts of the Inquisition to attain its purpose, a system of torture designed to cow and terrorize Europe on the largest scale that the world has ever seen.

“Now that the Papacy had fallen, others prepared to take their place. Those who succeeded in due course were the Hapsburgs, seated, according to the division of their family, on the thrones of Vienna and Madrid. But in their attempt to discipline Europe they proved a scourge even worse than their spiritual forerunners. For, whereas the Papacy had the wish to kill but not always the power, the Hapsburgs had both. Instead of drawing blood only in retail by torture, they drew it wholesale also on the field of scientific war. To Charles V. and Philip II. the world seemed a battle-ground above and a dungeon below. They gutted Rome and ravaged Italy so thoroughly that both were a wreck until our own day. In the Netherlands their policy was—Alva. They distracted France as much by treachery as by open fighting. They planned the destruction¹ of England by the Armada. As for their own two kingdoms, Spain and Germany, they exhausted the first so much that she has never recovered it; while, as for the second, they surpassed even themselves in the Thirty Years' War, a war so bitter and destructive that it has

split the German race into two nations, and paralyzed both sections for two centuries. But all this is little compared with all that history could tell against them. The New Hemisphere being opened, they must needs send their Cortes and their Pizarros to plunder and ravish and destroy it. They must needs bring their faggot and their fire across the ocean to become the grand inquisitors of the world.

“When the Hapsburgs had spent all their energies and had become generally odious, France undertook the task of organizing Europe. But she too, with almost incredible frenzy, instead of setting an example of peace and culture to the nations, plunged into a series of unnecessary wars under the guidance of Louis XIV. From the date that this monarch commenced the War of Devolution and gratuitously invaded Flanders, up to the battle of Waterloo, there was scarcely a nation of importance that France did not assail. In Ireland, in Spain, in Italy, in the Netherlands, in Germany, in Austria, in Russia; in the Far East and the Far West; in Africa from the west coast to Egypt; in the West Indies and in numberless islands of the ocean, her fleets and armies piled up their dead. Her monarchs styled themselves the most Christian Kings!

“Though the kings were of this nature, it was unhappily much worse with the people over whom they ruled. For when, during the course of this period, the French rid themselves at length of the intolerable incubus of such a government, there was revealed the greatest tragedy of all in your annals. The people, so far from being more merciful, proved themselves even more dangerous bandits than their decapitated masters. They were equally warlike, for

they embarked at once on a twenty years' war; they were far more formidable, for they were henceforth a whole nation in arms.

“The relatively short period which has elapsed since the battle of Waterloo falls naturally into two parts. For a time the European nations were so utterly prostrate by their recent armageddon that wars were few and recuperation imperative. Men began even to prate about the parliament of man, about war-drums beating no longer, about the furling of battle-flags, and the federation of the world. England organized an universal exhibition; it was advertised as ushering in the brotherhood of all peoples, and enthusiasts gushed over the inauguration of an era of universal peace. I need not say that almost from that moment the most bloody wars have raged, almost without intermission, in every quarter of the globe. To confine myself to Europe alone, Italy fought Austria; Austria fought Germany; Germany fought France; France fought Russia; Russia fought England; Germany fought Denmark; Russia fought Turkey; but I shall exhaust myself before I exhaust the catalogue. The chief motive of these conflicts was the rival ambition of Germany and of Russia to become respectively the leaders of Europe, as the Papacy, and Spain, and Austria, and France had been before. Six out of the seven wars just enumerated were waged with that object. For the primacy of the West, once centred in turn at Rome, at Madrid, at Vienna, and at Paris, was now removing to Berlin or to Petersburg. Thus it was still the same old weary tale of blood. You saw, I think, the sombre evening of Magersfontein, and you may see Port Arthur. Multiply those scenes a thousandfold; extend them

over fifteen centuries, and you will begin to realize something of the horror with which we Orientals regard the barbarism, or, if you will, the civilization of Europe.

“Such, then, is the series of attempts which have been made to re-establish some sort of order in Europe, and such the failure which has ensued. That failure was, I imagine, principally owing to the wanton vehemence of those who in turn undertook the task. But how the blame may be distributed matters not to us Asiatics. We only see that your history of fifteen centuries can be summarized in a sentence. You destroyed the Roman Empire, and have put nothing in its place.

“But, although the blame for this constant turbulence within Europe need not be apportioned further, it has had the gravest possible consequences for ourselves who belong to the world without. It is to these results that I desire briefly to draw your attention. The peoples of Europe, thus constantly assailed by the most powerful nation for the time being among them, have had perforce to organize and arm to the teeth. Owing to the immense and constant expenditure thus entailed, this has spelt, in many cases, something like ruin, or, at any rate, has involved the imposition of a crushing load of debt. Look at Spain, or France, or indeed at any other nation of Europe to-day. In order to ease themselves of this intolerable burden of taxation, the governments or peoples have felt an irresistible impulse to plunder the races of the outer world, in order to recoup themselves out of the proceeds by that desperate and unscrupulous expedient.

“There is another result, parallel to this one, and

arising, like it, from the miserable animosities of Europe. In their terror of each other's shadow, the nations of Christendom are constantly seizing the possessions of us Asiatics and others, not for the wealth thus secured, but for reasons of strategy. Russia took Port Arthur, Germany occupied Kiaochau, and Britain Wei-hai-Wei, in order to protect themselves against each other's designs. We Chinese were forced to yield up our undoubted and indubitable possessions, which Europe appropriated utterly regardless of any rights of ours. As your Indian Viceroy observed the other day, the European situation is being recreated in Asia, and, indeed, throughout the globe. This means that the vortex of militarism has absorbed the whole world into its baleful whirlpool, upon either side of which stands a Scylla and a Charybdis, financial ruin on the one hand, or, if not, then subjugation and loss of freedom on the other.

“Such, then, are the incalculable evils which the nations of Christendom have inflicted, first, upon each other, and next, upon the world at large. But let us avert our eyes from that degrading spectacle of chaos within and lawlessness without. Look at China. There she lies across the narrow strait.

“Four and twenty centuries and a half ago, that is a thousand years before the Anglo-Saxons were heard of, a child was born in Shantung. This child was destined to become the most wise man, Buddha and Mahomet excepted, that ever was. K'ung-foo-tsze, Confucius, “the master K'ung,” was his name. His mission was not to set fire to the human spirit, as did Mahomet; or to baptize it with the lethean waters of meditation, as did Buddha. The bare and blazing plain of Islam, the mysterious peaks of

Buddhism, wrapped in the snows of eternal thought, were not for him.

“He was only a plain and simple citizen, a man among men. As he grew up, the government of Lû was upon his shoulder, and his good sense and industry did wonders in that post, till his enemies rose up against him and cast him out. So he wandered for thirteen years in the wilderness, knowing the bread and water of affliction. But sitting, as it were, by the wayside of existence, he spread out upon his lap, familiarly, the knotted skein of human destiny, and strove to disentangle it. He did not claim, rather he disclaimed, to know anything direct of heaven. When they talked upon such mysteries, he told them not to pretend to know the unknowable, and to have done, once for all, with lying. ‘Wisdom teaches one,’ he said simply, ‘to give one’s self to the duties due to men.’ And China was grateful to him for this precept, and has given herself to him from that day to this.

“It would take me far too long to enumerate his commandments. Besides, you know them. But there are three main points upon which I would touch. You in Europe hold the dogma that man’s nature is essentially evil; and indeed when I look at Europe I am not surprised. But Confucius held that man’s nature is fundamentally and originally upright, *Jin pun shên*, perhaps because he lived among us Chinese. All that was needed, then, was to map out more precisely the sphere and scope of mutual obligation, and therefore in the Doctrine of the Mean he declared that nature is the gift of heaven; that to accord with nature is duty; and that to prescribe this path is the end of instruction. This he did without any pretence of

inspiration, so that his followers might never cloak their passions under the sacred name of piety, and so that all human actions might be referable to human purposes. Next, above all other duties, he inculcated the need of harmony, more especially among families, as his first and great commandment, to the end that from this pure source it might spread throughout that greatest of all families, the Chinese race. Right, not might; and so, throughout the stretch of centuries, as your own Sir Robert Hart has said, the worship of right has gone on strengthening among us, and to hint to Chinamen that right must be supported with might excites something more than amazement.

“There is a third point upon which the Ancient Teacher, the Perfect Sage, laid stress. He described himself one day to a disciple as a man who could forget the need of food, and could ignore the call of sorrow, in his eager enthusiasm for the truth. He held, with Plato, that the wisest citizens are those best fitted to rule a state, and he valued knowledge at the highest price. Our examination system is the symptom of this principle. I am glad to see that even in Europe you have begun to adopt it with some results. Thus it has come about that, to quote again the same authority—

“‘In China intellectual prowess wins honour everywhere. In no other country is education so prized, so honoured, so utilized, and so rewarded; along its lofty ladder, broad at the base and narrow at the top, the son of the poorest peasant may win his way to the highest post among the ministers of state.’* ”

“To do one’s common duty in the working world ;

* Ah Hok was apparently quoting from a paper written by Sir Robert Hart, dated Peking, December, 1900.

to fulfil all ties in the family; and to seek truth in the inner chambers of the heart, was his triple injunction. This was the sound and goodly bridge which, an architect, not a visionary, he cast for man across the troubled waters.

“Such principles as these, dear sir, enlarged and deepened by Buddhism in some respects if, in others, vulgarized and popularized by Taoism, produced the magnificent empire of China. This empire, according to European ideas, had a weakness; it was not military; and its vast expansion and solidity was due to the singular attraction exercised upon others by the untiring industry, the invariable cheerfulness, the intelligent procedure, the high sense of honour and honesty, the peaceful and law-abiding proclivities of its people, rather than to its frowning armadas or to its ambitious soldiery. It was a people exquisitely courteous, worshipping talent, able to learn anything and do anything, delighting in literature, possessed of and practising an admirable system of ethics, wonderfully endowed with common sense, devotees not of violence but of equity, full of respect for the claims of family, and humbly resigned to the awful will of Heaven. Thus richly endowed, the empire towered above its neighbours, antique, stately, unaggressive, honoured and secure, materially as well as morally, in the words of your old Sir John Maundeville, ‘the greatest kingdom of the world.’ Such indeed was the Middle Kingdom—such, alas, would it be to-day but for you.”

At this point in his discourse Ah Hok stopped dead. I suppose that some secret gust of indignation had disordered the march of his thought. But I certainly could not detect the slightest emotion in

his face, which only grew more than usually impassive, and almost immediately he resumed.

“As I said just now, this empire was not powerful in a military sense. Hence, perhaps, it was not an altogether welcome event when in the early years of the sixteenth century a Portuguese armament appeared off the coast. Nevertheless, the squadron was well and even cordially received, according to the maxim impressed upon us by our sages to deal tenderly with the stranger from afar. All would have proceeded smoothly had it not been that, according to the records both of Europe and China, the Portuguese traders on the coast rapidly filled up a deep cup of iniquity. They were guilty of every form of outrage, and it is well known that the history of the early Portuguese settlements in China is stained by every form of atrocity. Although these horrors naturally roused the keenest indignation, our government permitted Portugal to establish herself at Macao, where, in spite of her weakness, she has been allowed to remain ever since. Macao lies yonder round that angle of rock. If you go there, be careful. The Portuguese have made it the gambling-place of the East!

“Although the Portuguese might be termed a people peculiarly and even enthusiastically Christian, there was one European nation even more so. These elect champions of the Cross were the Spaniards. Some years after the arrival of the Portuguese our anxieties were deepened by the arrival of a Spanish squadron which seized the Philippine Archipelago, immediately opposite our shores, without the faintest colour of right. At first our numerous Chinese residents in those islands did not attract their particular

attention, and 'the black-haired race' pursued the even tenor of its accustomed industries of gardening and shopkeeping. Our people even increased in numbers, and set about the rapid development of that superb region. Apparently, however, this was the last thing desired by Spain. The Spaniards were irritated at the contrast with their own lassitude; they flew to arms, and in the most brutal and cold-blooded manner they massacred twenty thousand innocent Chinese residents. China did not retaliate. So Spain proved as barbarous as Portugal. 'They are a well-matched pair, Fei Chung and Yu Hun.'*

"Besides Spain and Portugal, there was a third European power of importance with whom China presently came into contact. This power was Russia, whose forces in the latter portion of the sixteenth century had crossed the Ural mountain. According to the Siberian archives, it was in 1619 or 1620 that the Voivod of Tobolsk sent a couple of Cossacks to Peking; and so rapid was Russian progress that, soon after the middle of the seventeenth century they were making themselves definitely felt upon the Amoor river. With that cynical policy of theirs they promptly busied themselves with fomenting disorder among our Tartar subjects of that region, in order to embarrass the central government of the Son of Heaven, and set about acquiring a foothold in territory not their own. But everybody knows nowadays how to rate the morality of the policy which they have pursued against us for two and a half centuries. Their fate will come.

"In the midst of these ominous forewarnings of

* A Chinese proverb concerning persons hopelessly vicious. The two persons named were the wicked ministers of Chou Wang.

what tender mercy we might expect from Europe, there was an arrival more ominous still. I refer to the coming of the missionaries. Even in those early days, our statesmen, with a just instinct, seem to have scented danger from afar, and to have known that, as the flight of seagulls inland portends a coming tempest, so the flight of missionaries into any interior signifies a quarrel, a gunboat, a raid, and an annexation. Nevertheless, during the reign of Shunchih, in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, the zealots were treated extremely well by that monarch; high honours were accorded to them for their skill in mathematics, and one of them was even appointed a tutor in the Imperial household. The next emperor was equally lenient and well disposed.

“‘As we do not restrain the lamas of Tartary,’ ran his gracious edict, ‘or the bonzes of China from building temples and burning incense, we cannot refuse these Christians having their own churches, and publicly teaching their religion. Were we not to do this we should be inconsistent. We hold, then, that they may build temples to the Lord of Heaven, and maintain them wherever they will; and that those who hearken to them may freely resort to them to observe the rites usual to Christianity.’

“The son and successor of this emperor, however, though desirous of giving equal toleration, had to issue an edict of a more restrictive kind—

“‘What would you Christians say if I were to send a troop of bonzes and lamas into your country in order to preach their doctrines? How would you receive them? You wish that all Chinese should become Christians, and indeed your creed commands it. I am well aware of this; but in that event, what would become of us? Should we not soon be merely

the subjects of your kings? The converts you have made already recognize nobody but you, and in a time of trouble they would listen to no other voice but yours. I permit you to reside here and at Canton as long as you give no cause for complaint; but if any should arise, I will not allow you to remain here and at Canton. I will have none of you in the provinces. The emperor, my father, suffered much in reputation by the condescension with which he allowed you to establish yourselves. Do not imagine that I have nothing against you, or on the other hand that I wish to oppress you. My sole care is to govern the empire well.

“If you were to bear in mind the lamentable misconduct of the missionaries, which instigated this edict after so many years of clemency and forbearance upon the part of the Peking government, you would assuredly pronounce that never was a proclamation more mildly worded, or more completely reasonable in all its expressions. For very many years a fierce and scandalous contest had been waged between the three subsections of the Roman Catholic sect which had found a footing in China. These subsections were the Dominicans and Franciscans on one side, and the Jesuits on the other. They were quarrelling for power. What added materially to the gravity of this holy strife was that behind these sects stood the hungry nations of Europe. Portugal backed the Jesuits, while the Franciscans and Dominicans represented the interests of France and Italy. Hence, there was no knowing what thunderbolt of war might at any hour descend upon us from some Christian power offended at our neglect to support their particular champions in the dogmatic fray. One incident will suffice. The Pope sent out a legate to effect some settlement, an action which, I may remark

incidentally, he had no right to take without imperial sanction. The legate arrived, and, being opposed to the Jesuits, rebuked them for the very profitable rate of 24 per cent. at which they were doing a flourishing banking business in Peking, though this was nothing compared with the commerce in wines, clocks, and other industries by which these pious fathers were amassing treasures still more enormous. His denunciation of these malpractices was almost immediately followed by a severe attack of apparent poisoning, following upon a meal which had been served to him. More recriminations, rising almost to the height of a civil strife. Finally, the Emperor banished the legate and others as turbulent and disorderly men.

“These, then, were the circumstances in which China, in the seventeenth century, closed her doors definitely against the European world of Christendom. When I reflect that, on the reopening of those doors, there ensued in our own times our Taiping rebellion, by which, as the leading authorities of the East believe, over 20,000,000 of our people perished in an attempted Christian movement, made by a Christian convert, to Christianize China, then I say without hesitation that the statesmen of those days, perhaps anticipating such a catastrophe, were perfectly right in taking early action. Or rather, their action, so far from being early, was dilatory in an undue degree, when we consider the degradation which the disreputable quarrels of the friars had already reflected upon the name of Europe, and indeed upon the cause of religion itself.

“There was, however, an even weightier justification for so important a step. As I have already said,

a series of European nations had appeared at our frontiers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Not to mention the futile attempts of Holland, there were the Portuguese, the Spaniards, and the Russians. Robbery, treachery, and murder characterized their actions, whether in the Philippines, at Macao, or on the Amoor. I speak of indubitable and indisputable historical facts admitted in your own histories, and I contend that we had as much right and as much necessity to close our doors against such evildoers as any householder to fasten his shutters against a gang of burglars. But I have shown also how tardily and with how much reluctance, and under what intolerable provocation we put up the bars.

“This was the series of events which caused us Chinese to fly from contact with the European world. Did we lose something, or even much, by such an act of isolation and self-immurement? Oh, I admit it. But whose was the fault? And thus arose that China of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries so averse to entrust herself once more to your grasp. But this is not the real China, the land of old so eager for knowledge, so full of honour for the stranger within her gates, the China of which Marco Polo and the friar Odoric, the papal legate John de' Marignolli, and the Arab wanderer Ibn Batuta had to tell; she who allowed the Mohammedan communities to be ruled by their own Kazis; she who opened wide her gates thirteen centuries ago to the Nestorian Christians; she whose emperor Ming-ti, in the first century of your era, sent to Tartary and Central India for the Buddhist books, and who raised that philosophic creed in the fourth century into the official category of her authorized religions. Do you

remember that passage in Marco Polo, where Kublai Khan inquired much concerning the Pope, and averred that, if it could be fairly proved that the law of Christ was the best, he and all under him would readily turn to Christ? He asked, too, for the oil of the lamp burning in the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; and Polo descants upon the open-mindedness, courtesy, and polish of the Chinese. You have read, too, perhaps, that passage in the commentaries of Albuquerque, the founder of Portugal's Eastern empire early in the sixteenth century, where he declares that he has noticed more courtesy and humanity among the masters of the Chinese junks in yonder waters now sparkling below us than he had ever been able to discover among the finest flower of the aristocracy of Europe.

“And now let me touch upon the result for China of her attempt thus to shut out the European world and exclude such dangerous aggressors. While she stood thus in her self-imposed abeyance, the European peoples grew more than ever warlike, battles scarcely ceased, and thus, by a natural sequence, their capacity for the art of war made wonderful progress both by land and sea. This fact was, in one sense, a benefit, but, in another sense, a most serious danger, for the Eighteen Provinces. The advantage accruing to us from the preoccupation of Europe in its own quarrels was comparative immunity, at least for the time. But this was outbalanced by the certainty that when Europe should find a breathing-space again to assault us, we should suffer most grievously from our stagnation in, and even contempt for, the science of the slaughter of man by man.

“At length, as time went forward, the latter evil befel. After Napoleon had disappeared, there followed a necessary period of European recuperation from the exhaustion of such terrific wars. But presently, with a new generation springing up, men began to revert to their ancient proclivities. Why not try the 'prentice hand of that younger generation on China? This time it was England who led the way. A commercial and diplomatic warfare was raised over the question of Indian opium to be imported into China against the wishes of our government. Real war ensued, and your people seized this very rock of Hongkong, upon which we are now standing, in your eyes so conveniently situated as to be termed the Spithead of the East, whence China may be overawed easily. But in our eyes it has been taken from us by mere force and violence, and has become, as everybody knows, the centre of opium smuggling, of trade in arms and contraband, a trysting-place, too, of lawlessness and disaffection. This exposure of the military weakness of China led from that day forth to a perfect tornado of European assaults upon the empire. England and France, Germany and Russia, they have all proved alike. Tongkin, Annam and Cochin China, have been wrested from us by France; Siam has been taught to repudiate her old allegiance; you British have seized Burma, our vassal, in the south, and have occupied Wei-hai-Wei in the north, not to mention Hongkong; Germany lords it over the province of Shantung; the Amoor and Ussuri provinces and Manchuria have been snatched by Russia. Worst of all, through the gaps thus made has poured that ever ominous tide of missionaries, uprooting ancient beliefs, unsettling society,

breeding wars, and spreading scepticism. I remember the despairing words of Prince Kung uttered to the British ambassador, 'Take away your opium and your missionaries, and all will be well!'

"Again my thoughts revert from this deplorable spectacle back to China. You must not think for a moment that because China closed herself, or tried to close herself, during these recent centuries against Europe, that, therefore, her government or her people ceased to confer upon the human species those great benefits of which she has ever been so lavish since the earliest times. I do not refer to negative benefits, that is, to the incalculable advantage which it has been to the world at large, that a population of 400,000,000 persons is peaceful, orderly, industrious, and unambitious. If they had been the opposite, they could long ago have destroyed Europe. But, passing by that consideration, let me touch upon China's active civilizing influence in the world of the past and of the present. Glance at Japan on one side of her, at Mongolia on the other, and then at the southern countries in the Far East, dead corpses which China has bidden arise and live.

"If a casual stranger were to be asked to give his opinion as to the cause of the rise and progress of modern Japan, he would inevitably ascribe it to Europe. That wonderful army was organized chiefly on German lines; Lieutenant Hawes, of your Royal Marines, was the father of the navy, and its discipline was regulated according to the practice of the English Naval Gunnery School; the constitution may be termed partly German and partly British; an Englishman, Mr. Black, founded Japanese journalism; an American, Commodore Perry, negotiated the first

treaty, of 1854, throwing Japan open to foreign business methods; Danes have controlled her cable system; a Frenchman, Monsieur Boissonade de Fontarabie, drafted the criminal code and code of criminal procedure on the basis of the code Napoleon; Portuguese introduced Christianity; the Dutch, for two centuries from their post on the island of Deshima in Nagasaki harbour, kept alive a faint but decided interconnection between the two civilizations of Europe and the Dai Nippon. All the apparatus has come from Europe. But look a little deeper, and you will perceive that modern Japan is due to China, after all.

“In order that Japan could accept and utilize these modern appliances, it was necessary for her to possess the intellect to appreciate, and the moral power to assimilate them. Both these capacities are the endowment conferred on her by China. However much her historians may be pleased to ascribe to her an immemorial and even sacred origin, Japan began her life as a civilized nation only in the seventh century of the Christian era. It was then that Chinese institutions poured in upon her like a flood, and effected a change more sweeping and pregnant even than that of which we are to-day the witnesses. At that early date she was transformed from barbarism to culture. During the ensuing one thousand years Buddhism reigned supreme, for this was the branch of Chinese religion most affected by mediæval Japan. But in the seventeenth century the Confucian classics were first made generally known to the people, and since that time Confucianism has really been the ruler of the Japanese intellect and morals. From this long and diverse education that nation

has received first an intellectual impulse, a determination to know coupled with an extraordinary capacity to retain a lesson. Next, her morals have been not less powerfully moulded. The great commandment of Confucius is obedience, harmony, discipline, loyalty, as the various manifestations of the same quality may be termed. Thus Japan acts like one man, accepts wholly and almost without question the guidance of her leading spirits and constituted authorities, and absorbs with amazing thoroughness the practices and the theories which they pronounce to be the best. It has been said that China is a sea that salts all that flows into it. She is also a Nile that in its overflow has vivified the East.

“Turn now from Japan to an opposite quarter where Chinese influence has had sway. We still possess, as you know, a vast colonial empire, in spite of the ravages inflicted upon us by Europe in recent times. China proper consists of eighteen provinces, the Shih Pa Sheng, but outside that area are the colonial dominions managed by our Colonial Office, the Li Fan Yüan. Among the chief of these are the two Mongolias, the inner and the outer, termed respectively the Nei Mêng-Ku and the Wai Mêng-Ku. This extensive region is inhabited by the Mongols, who from the dawn of history were the most quarrelsome and most uncontrollable people that almost ever existed. Their unruly passions found vent in the Middle Ages under their famous chieftain Jinghis Khan, well-nigh the conqueror of the world. How is it that at present they are more tractable and amenable than almost any other people? It is owing to the sage and salutary policy of China. Never was

a suzerainty more lightly exercised or more effective in its operation.

“To confine your attention, for the sake of brevity, to the Inner Mongolia, you must know that the tribes of that country are divided into forty-nine banners, or groups, each ruled by a hereditary Jassak, or chief, theoretically the descendant of Jinghis Khan. No Jassak can succeed without the sanction of Peking, whither each heir is summoned on his succession, and disobedience is punished by fine or, in the last resort, by disinheritance. Further, the policy of the Manchu dynasty during the last two and a half centuries has been to encourage by every possible expedient the Lamaistic Church, whose Buddhist doctrines, at the date of the Manchu accession, had been already imported into Mongolia. The old primeval Shamanism has been frowned upon; Lamaism, with its peaceful philosophy, has been everywhere fostered; and thus it has been brought about that no less than one Mongol out of three to-day leads a monastic and ascetic existence, and, as a member of a potent and all-pervading hierarchy, cries halt to the passions and submission to whatever decree the Vermilion Pencil may indite.

“I have thus shown to you how the Chinese government has settled the difficult question of Mongolia in one direction, and how, in another, Chinese culture has wrought the deep foundations of the civilization of Japan. Let us look, in the third place, at the benefits conferred upon the Far East generally by the industry of our common people, the T'ong Yan.* I need not descant to you, for you have

* “T'ong Yan” means “The men of T'ong,” a phrase, in the South China dialect, for the people of China. Ah Hok, it should be remembered, was a citizen of South China.

the practical experience, of the incomparable qualities of the Chinese workman, daunted neither by Arctic ice nor by the flame of the tropics; unequalled for sobriety and docility; inured to any labour, however arduous or however delicate; equally at home on sea-board or in a rice-patch, in dragging a rickshaw or in managing all the complex business of banking accounts. It may be said of almost any Far Eastern country that its progress or stagnation may be measured by the number of Chinese whom it can attract or contains. Why is it that the Americans have failed in the Philippines, in spite of their wonderful resolution to hustle the East, and of their lavish outlay of the otherwise almighty dollar? It is because they exclude Chinamen, on whose energy the lazy Filipino depends. They are equally impolitic in Hawaii, and bid fair by consequence to ruin that singular paradise. On the other hand, the marvellous progress of Shanghai, of Hongkong, and above all of the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements is due to the free entry of the Chinese. In the latter region there are now five Chinamen to every ten of the natives; as miners they beat all competitors, and it is on tin-mining that that region relies at present for its prosperity. Borneo, again, has not proved very attractive to the Chinese, and accordingly Borneo languishes. Burma, on the other hand, swarms with them, and the future of Burma is with the Chinaman. Already there is a marvellous expansion. Conversely, Australia is so singularly backward and undeveloped, especially in her vast and empty northern regions, only because the Australian workman, aware that the Chinaman can beat him, has induced the politicians to raise the cry of a white,

though an empty, Australia, thus furnishing an excuse for excluding so dangerous a competitor. As long as this is done Australia will remain in the backwater of the East. Conversely, Siam has stood open, and now contains about a million and a half Chinese, who have done as much for her trade as they have done elsewhere. The Dutch East Indies contain a quarter of a million of us. How would the mining of Banca or of Billiton fare without us? In Delli they could not grow tobacco, in Rhio their pepper and their gambier would not be lucrative, without the skill and energy of Chinamen. China bears upon her shoulders the burden of the Far East. You boast your colonial successes in that region. Yours is the bragging and ours the work.

“And yet, in spite of all our services, we Chinese are well aware that the European nations, notably France, Germany, and Russia, meditate the entire division of China, much as Germany, Austria, and Russia have already divided Poland among themselves. Even England has lent herself freely to this project, and has proposed that her so-called sphere of influence should be the valley of the Yangtse-Kiang, leaving France, Germany, and Russia to apportion the north and the south. I can imagine no more immoral scheme. But, that consideration paart, how mischievous to the interests of the world at large that the one nation, still peaceful in all its principles and practice, should be made a recruiting-ground for European sergeant-majors, and turned into a cockpit of the dying and the dead.

“Nevertheless, you must not suppose hastily that the indignation which we Asiatics have a right to feel against you, perturbs or consumes us overmuch.

We shall not go into hysterics. But take care. Do not attribute this attitude to our indifference. It is due to our contempt. By-and-by, perhaps, we will descend to your level, and, like Japan, exchange our bows and arrows for lyddite and melinite, those two pillars of the temple which Europe has built. Then we shall be your equals or your superiors, and shall be as favoured worshippers at the war-god's shrine as you. Or, perhaps, we shall decide not to soil ourselves with such infamies, but to adhere to the path of peace. Europe, in that case, will inevitably cast lots for our garments, and will pocket our possessions. Even so, I do not shrink from the contemplation of such a catastrophe, but look to the end with imperturbable faith.

“What has impressed me most during my residence in Europe has been the indubitable marks of decadence visible on every side. And further, you are so badly governed. I read in one of your most approved authorities the other day that

“‘in England the lot of the labourer is incessant field toil, with rheumatism at fifty and the workhouse at the end of the vista; while the misery in such cities as London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, is only too well known. In France there is less pauperism, but nothing can be more pinched and sordid than the life of the bulk of the peasantry. In the great towns of Germany there is constant distress and increasing discontent. The riots in Belgium have told an even more painful tale of the wretchedness of the miners and artisans there. In Italy the condition of the rural population of Venetia, as well as of her southern provinces, seems to grow worse, and fills her statesmen with alarm. Of Russia, with her eighty millions of peasants, living in half barbarism, there is no need to speak.’* ”

* This refers to Bryce, “American Commonwealth,” chap. cxv. *ad init.*

“My own experience in your continent has been to find region after region far gone towards deterioration. Look at Spain, a mummy in whom once burnt the most ardent energies. Is the Italian to-day a tithe of what the Roman was in past centuries? Is France anything more than the pale reflection of her former self under Napoleon or under the Grand Monarch? The Balkan peoples make no progress out of the involved circle of their political confusions. The Spartan or the Athenian of antiquity would find not a drop of his blood or an ounce of his energies in the modern Greek. Austria can make no advance amid her inextricable quarrels of Slav *versus* Teuton. Russia in her slough sinks more deep than ever. But if all this be so, then where is the boasted power and good government and prosperity and civilization of Europe?

“The cause of the decline of Europe is not far to seek. It lies in her militarism, which bids fair to be her ruin. Her people are already overburdened by the enormous and ever-growing load of their national indebtedness; her industry staggers under that overwhelming imposition; want and care enfeeble the productive powers and rack the hearts of a vast majority of her inhabitants, and thus from the innumerable slums of her teeming cities and from the tenements where men and women are herded more foully than the beasts that perish, there ever arises a murmur of agony, an exceeding bitter cry.

“But there will be nothing dramatic in the process of her dissolution. There will be no crack of doom. The retribution for all your sins against us will come quietly. As their taxes grow and as their life becomes increasingly difficult, your men will be ever more ready

to cast the dust of the old world from off their feet. Your best and bravest, your most invaluable citizens, will take wing across the oceans to better continents, while the weakling and the pauper will stay behind. Thus your ever-ascending scale of impositions will fall upon a populace ever less competent and ever less ready to sustain it, till at length the dumb despair and the inarticulate misery will find vent in action at last. Men will discover that even the peace of Europe is more terrible than war in other continents. They will shrink with loathing from the institutions of their barbarism. Your armaments will swarm only with the weakling and the mutineer, and disaffection, like the frost, will wither the fine flower of your once unconquerable hosts. Before the Medusa face of necessity European patriotism, which wore so bright a visage, will turn to stone. And then some day some tribe of Africa or Asia will rise against you, and you will not be able to suppress the insurrection or master the infection of revolt. Ten thousand hands will strike sacrilegiously upon the imposture of your proud façade, and down it will come in irrecoverable ruins, for all men to know that your frescoes are faded as the Tyrian dye, and your foundations mouldered as the Venetian palaces.

“Such will be the story which some Asiatic Gibbon will recount of the decline and fall of Europe. When the day of your eviction comes, Asia will rejoice from end to end in all her peoples, nations, creeds, and languages. But I hope that in that hour she will remember the first of the eight precepts of her own Buddha: ‘Thou shalt not kill!’ May she follow piously in his footsteps who climbed so high the terraced heights of wisdom along that

pathway of which the gate is purity and the goal is love!

“This for the future. As regards the present and the past, I have my own opinion concerning you. I hesitate to give it; but perhaps I shall not be far wrong if I say that we Asiatics endorse the view of the King of the Brobdingnagians. One day that prince asked Gulliver concerning Europe. In reply Gulliver gave him the most favourable account of that continent at all consistent with common honesty, and thought that he had created a good impression. But the effect proved to be entirely otherwise upon the mind of the good old king. The monarch was perfectly astonished at the historical account, and protested, to Gulliver's dismay, that it was only a heap of conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, and banishments; the very worst effects that avarice, faction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage, hatred, envy, malice, and ambition could produce. And he ended finally by saying, as far as I can remember, that ‘I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the face of the earth.’”

As Ah Hok uttered these concluding words my anger and indignation knew no bounds. Here was a man who despised and detested our civilization from the bottom of his heart, and in whose eyes all that we have most learned to love and reverence seemed nothing more than contemptible barbarism. I experienced at that moment somewhat of what I suppose must have been the sensations of the Persian, when, from “the rocky brow that looks o'er seaborne Salamis,” he witnessed the destruction of his hitherto

invincible Armada. It would have been useless to retaliate with some violent and embittered rebuke. That might have silenced but would not have persuaded such a man as Ah Hok; for the worst of the matter was that his statements of fact were not entirely controvertible, and had been advanced with a force and a cogency which I am altogether at a loss to reproduce. Nevertheless, however insufficient and unprepared a champion, I felt bound, as a citizen of Christendom and of Britain, to give some account of the faith that was in me, and to furnish some sort of defence against such dangerous logic. So I determined, like Charles Fox, to plunge in immediately, relying upon the inspiration of the moment to pull me through. As regards the temper in which my answer should be framed, I hastily resolved, since I could not display the wisdom of Haroun-al-Raschid, at least to preserve the discretion of Sharázád.

CHAPTER XI

THE REPLY OF CHRISTENDOM

"SAGE and master," I replied discreetly, "in the firmament of knowledge the star of your wisdom is bright. Easily enough, in the days of your youth, you must have trodden the dark cloud of learning;* and, indeed, once or twice, as your discourse proceeded, I could think that I was listening to an incarnation of Lao-Tsŭ himself. Your arguments opened before you in so fair and natural a sequence that they seemed like the white lotus flowers as they open to the rising moon.

"Your opinion, then, is that the European nations, and England among them, do not possess any superiority of civilization, however much they may claim it; and that, therefore, they have no right to their respective empires. The proofs that you adduce are—first, the barbaric internal history of Christendom; and next, our savage and shameless conduct towards the feebler nations without. Lastly, you seem to anticipate and even to desire, our eventual eviction from the scene of our crimes. Admitting our strength, you deny that our might constitutes our right to empire. It is not our mental power but our malevolence, which causes you to rebuke us. You reprobate our

* "To tread the dark cloud" is a Chinese idiom signifying to take a high class in the schools.

dominion, not because we are so clever, but because we are so far gone in wickedness.

“Perhaps you will permit me, before evening comes on, to examine these propositions. We Englishmen rule over 340,000,000 persons of the dark race, mostly resident in Asia. Good-bye to that empire if such views as yours were generally entertained by them. Indeed, who knows whether such a conception of our conduct is not, as it is, secretly cherished far and wide. Add to this, that you have painted the scene in such volcanic colours that no stability is discernible below, or light above. To listen to you, the long winding stair of human history leads only to a prison house, where humanity lies excruciating on the rack. You have depicted mankind in the style of those Spanish artists who cast upon their canvas an impenetrable gloom, except where a bright bar of light illuminates with an unnatural relief some tonsured scalp or saintly aureole. Believe me, virtue is not an appanage of China. The world is wider than was dreamt of by ‘the master K’ung.’

“Your argument began with the statement that everything at first combined to make the Roman empire a success; that presently this cheerful prospect for civilization was obscured and obliterated by ourselves, the barbarians; and that Europe has been a chaos ever since. If that be so, the primary responsibility must rest with Asia, since it was the uncontrollable turbulence of Asia which caused the interminable echelon of fugitive nations to impinge upon the Roman boundaries, and shatter the imperial government.

“But, however that may be, you think that the coming of the barbarian was an irreparable disaster.

But after all, though they destroyed the Roman empire, that empire was not the world. Though the Romans professed to govern mankind, yet even in Europe they only ruled up to the Danube and Rhine. Their grand problem had been how to defend civilization against the outer peoples, and they had tried to solve it by building a military scientific frontier. Surely, that method was in itself a profound confession of incompetence and weakness, for it meant that the barbarians could never be civilized or subdued by Rome. What is called in metaphor the fall of the Roman empire only meant that these two diverse forces of barbarism and culture, hitherto separate, henceforth became intermingled, by the entry of the barbarians into the Roman bounds. All Europe, you say, became a chaos. Rather, Europe began.

“ There followed six centuries of what you describe, not altogether unjustly, as a cataract of blood. But, because this was so, it must not be supposed that those barbarians were worse than they had been when they roamed as utter savages on the steppes of Russia or among the forests of Germany. No, indeed; their instruction had commenced. Even in that age neither the discipline of Rome, nor the spirit of Christianity, nor the thought of Greece were wholly forgotten. The Holy Roman Empire preserved the image of the first; the art and literature of Greece took cover at Constantinople, whence eventually they were to issue forth in triumph; while the Papacy—and this was the most priceless of all its services—still kept its vigil in the long and dreadful night. If those ages were indescribably miserable, it was because fresh hordes from Asia kept Europe in a turmoil

apparently without end ; while, even apart from that scourge, life presented the problem, insoluble as it seemed, of reconciling barbarian individualism with the civil order immortally associated with the name of Rome. How was authority to be prevented from hardening into tyranny, and how was freedom to be prevented from dissolving into license among the most vigorous and vehement races of the world? That was a problem which had proved too difficult for Rome herself to solve ; and I make bold to assert that the age which grappled with it deserves the respect, not the contumely, of ourselves.

“At length, with the opening of the eleventh century, there were symptoms that mankind was not destined to sink beneath the weight of these manifold misfortunes and dilemmas. Asia ceased to threaten us in such strength as before, and some sort of solution for the difficulty of the reorganization of Europe began to take shape and substance before the minds of men. That solution was one for which no word exists in the Chinese language : Nationality.

“This method of political organization was new. It was a compromise. On the one hand, it avoided imperialism ; that is, Europe was not to be unified and amalgamated under one government, according to the Roman scheme. On the other hand, it evaded feudalism ; that is, Europe was not to consist of innumerable petty chieftains each practically independent. But, henceforth, the West was to evolve gradually into a number of communities, each sovereign and independent, and each endowed internally with Roman order and discipline. Thus license and law met together and effected a compact. Might was still to rule, unhappily, in the external

affairs of nations, but right was to begin to rule within.

“That evolution has been accomplished only through centuries of bloody and warlike history. These struggles were of a threefold nature, but all were processes leading up to this one result. First, Asia, which had threatened Europe so severely during the Dark Ages, threatened still, though with an ever-decreasing momentum; and thus we had to strive with Turks, and Mongols, and Moors, for the existence of Christendom, but, on the whole, with improving strength and the upper hand. Next, within each of these areas which were to become nations, the disorders and lawlessness, inherited from the barbarians and innate in their descendants, had to be put down by the power of monarchs, who were the prime agents of nationality. Lastly, as between these young incipient peoples, constant and never-ending wars arose, and are being bred to-day, as to who should be the greatest. For the imperial spirit of the Cæsars still dwelt, and still dwells, in Europe, so that Italy with her Popes, and Austria with her Hapsburgs, and Spain, and France, and Germany, and Russia, have each made a bid for dominion, hoping to roll back the progress of freedom and reconstitute Europe under themselves. But against this tremendous and ever-recurring reaction England has stood as a successful champion in the cause of liberty.

“There is yet another stage of progress beyond those already named. This has not been attained in our day, nor will it be reached for ages still to come. But already there is the faint dawn of its promise. Hitherto violence and might have too often governed

the European nations in their dealings with each other, and thus our primeval barbarism has there had scope to live. But the coming ages will find a cure. International law will gather scope and validity. A concert of Europe will assemble and will not be dissolved. A Holy Alliance, not of princes but of peoples, will be consummated in the name of freedom. In that day a family will be founded; it will be called Europe. Still later it will bear a nobler appellation; it will be called Mankind.

“This, then, is the answer to the first part of your argument. You stated that, since the fall of the Roman empire, the life of Europe has been one unceasing round of chaos and insensate conflict. The answer is that this interminable combat has been but the outward and visible sign of the energy with which the human conscience has been seeking a solution of human affairs. The nations of the West, with all their incomparable variety and vigour, have shaped themselves out of the cauldron of barbarism. They do, indeed, bear upon them the dreadful scars of their ordeal and the traits of their primeval savagery. Looking at all these disfigurements, you say they are dying. No; these are the proofs that they have survived worse evils than any which to-day can show.

“It was in the very midst of this long and arduous evolution that Europe was gradually brought into touch with the continents of America and Asia, Africa, and Australia. In this connection you proceed to point out that our conduct towards them has been a tissue of crimes. Let me endeavour to correct likewise that specious assumption.

“The first attempt to solve this new problem of the relationship of Europe and the outer world was

made by Spain, who obtained from the Pope authority to divide the new continents between herself and Portugal. As Spain presently absorbed Portugal, that meant a monopoly for Spain. Such an outcome was fraught with the gravest evils both for us and for you; since, if this assumption of authority had been unchallenged, Spain and Portugal, gathering mercenaries and treasures everywhere, would have ended by threatening and perhaps overwhelming Europe, and would thence have issued again, with pride ten times intensified, to complete the subjugation of the globe. From that moment the genuine interests of Europe and of the outer continents, so far from being essentially antagonistic, as you have argued, became, and have remained, essentially one and indivisible. It was the interest of Europe that no one power should become predominant in Christendom; that was, and is, precisely the interest of the outer world. Therefore Spain had to be resisted in her bold design; and when France succeeded to the Spanish ambition, France had to be opposed likewise; and when, after 1815, Russia stepped into the place of France, Russia had to be thwarted too. Those who organized that defence of the liberties, alike of the old world and of the new, were themselves Europeans, and chiefly they were the statesmen of England. So it has come about that the major part of the outer continents, after many conflicts and numberless negotiations, has been divided among a series of European powers. The liberties of Europe necessitated the conquest of the world.

“You say that the solution has brought mischief and misery to the outer peoples. But, indeed, leaving China aside for the moment, that is scarcely an arguable

position. For, on their first revelation to Europe, the vast proportion of those new areas, Africa, Central Asia, America, and Australia, were either comparatively empty or were peopled by races very low in the scale. You cannot seriously contend that North and South America are not more civilized than when they were occupied by primitive Red Indians or tenanted by the barbarous monarchies of Peru and Mexico; or that Australia has not been created out of nothingness; or that Siberia and Central Asia are not the better for the rough-and-ready order organized by the Russians; or that India is not infinitely happier than in the execrable days of Mohammedans and Mahrattas; or that Africa, over all of which, except Abyssinia, European dominion is now established, has not been afforded its first chance of peace, prosperity, and happiness. The question, viewed so far, does not bear examination.

“This is not all. Parallel with the progressive improvement, to which I have already referred, in the internal politics of Europe, there has proceeded an amelioration of the treatment accorded by the European nations to the peoples committed to their charge. This has been a movement somewhat analogous, though on an infinitely wider scale, to that discernible in Roman history. Nothing can be more singular than to trace in Rome’s career of conquest the gradual evolution of an humaner policy. At first the provincials detested their masters, with ample cause. Those whom the sword of the general had spared were garrotted by the extortion of the civilian. In time, however, a milder spirit and a more comprehensive benevolence began to breathe from the Palatine, so that, as Thræsea could say, the subject nations

used to tremble before the proconsuls ; now the proconsuls tremble before the subjects over whom they rule. It was the glory of Trajan and the Antonines to have wrought this noble revolution ; and the principle that the state has duties of that nature was proclaimed in the world for the first time by those monarchs.*

“Similarly with ourselves. An improvement corresponding to the Roman has operated with us. To-day, the principles that animate our rulers in India are of the most enlightened kind. Yet it was not so always. India was conquered in the eighteenth century, but, according to those who know best, until about the middle of the nineteenth century India was, to a great extent, governed on principles that might have commended themselves to the beneficent Oriental ruler rather than to modern Englishmen.†

“So again, look at what we have done in the Malay States. We took that region, not, indeed, out of philanthropy, but to anticipate the Dutch. Yet to-day, thanks to the advance of our ideals of government, the Malay has a security for life and property previously unknown. He has a permanent title to his land. He has communication by road and steamship and rail. He has a local market open for his produce ; free education for his children ; free hospital treatment ; and banks to safeguard his earnings ; slavery and piracy, once rife, are abolished. There is an equity before which the raiat is equal to the rajah. There is an end to the epidemics of small-pox and cholera. Government

* Cf. Renan, Lecture on Marcus Aurelius, London Institution, April 16, 1880.

† Cf. Sir John Strachey, “India,” p. 212.

helps him to drain and irrigate his padi fields, and even to build his mosque. The system of kra, or compulsory labour, is gone for ever. What is even of more moment for this present discussion, these splendid advantages are so well-recognized that your countrymen, Ah Hok, positively swarm into that region in order to enjoy, for once, the benefit of an excellent government. Go to Singapore, and you will find that the largest landowners, the most fashionable racing men, the most generous subscribers to local charities, the most loyal servants of the Crown are—Chinamen!

“You argued just now that whatever Europe may have done, she had no abstract right to any such extensions of her influence and authority. But here your reasoning was utterly inconsistent with itself, since you proceeded to expound with eloquence the services rendered to humanity by China in opening up by her labour, and in elevating by her civilization, the inferior portions of the Far East. If China has the right to a colonial empire of Tibetans and Mongols, so have we. Besides, you have professed yourself, as a Confucianist, a lover of knowledge and a devotee of the truth. But as long as Europe stood unconnected with other regions, or moved in an isolated orbit, so long truth, like the body of Osiris, lay hewn into a thousand pieces. Philosophy, like Isis, would seek in vain for the fragments scattered so wide over unknown seas and unexplored continents. But as soon as the time should come for the world to be known in its unity, then indeed would it be possible that they should be gathered limb to limb, and moulded into the immortal features of perfection.

This, then, is the answer to your reasoning that

Christendom has inflicted "incalculable evils" upon the world. And then you fortified your argument by looking at our treatment of China. Allow me to follow you thither as well.

"You gave a glowing account of the ancient splendour and strength of China, and then drew a moving picture of how all this had been ruined by Christendom. But assuredly this argument also was wholly at variance with itself. Four hundred millions of Chinese, if so efficient and energetic as you describe, under a government so sublime as you would have us think it, should have laughed at the petty assaults of a few Spanish or Portuguese sea-rovers from Europe. Instead, you deplore the necessity thus imposed upon China of closing her doors against the European world. But why should so magnificent an empire as that of the Son of Heaven have been afraid of such casual adventurers? The reason which it had was in reality very adequate, but it was ignored by you. Already in the sixteenth century your administration was mined by profound decay. This consciousness of decay was the cause of your otherwise inexplicable aversion to our advent.

"There has been one occasion, at all events, on which, in 1901, after the Boxer outbreak, the Chinese government has spoken the full truth concerning itself. Let me recall to you some of the terms of that extraordinary edict of confession.

"'Principles,' it ran, 'shine like sun and star, and are immutable; practice is a lute-string, to be tuned and changed. . . . For decades, things have gone from bad to worse in China, and what calamity has been the result! But now, reform must be taken in hand. . . . Our national fault is that we have got into an inextricable rut, and are fettered by red tape, just

as difficult to untie. Bookworms are too numerous, practical men too scarce. Incompetent red-tapists grow fat on mere forms, and officials think that to pen a neat despatch is to dispose of business. Old fossils are continued too long in office . . . one word accounts for the weakness of the government—selfishness, and another for the decadence of the empire—precedent. All this must be changed!

“‘Those who have studied Western methods,’ the edict proceeds to say, ‘have so far only mastered a smattering of language, something about manufacture, a little about armaments. But these things are merely the skin and the hair; they do not touch the secret of Western superiority—breadth of view in chiefs, concentration in subordinates, good faith in undertakings, and effectiveness in work.’

“Surely the Vermilion Pencil never indited truer words. If China considers herself to have been hardly treated by the nations, the fault and the remedy lies largely with herself. You know the proverb: ‘If a dog bite Fan Tan, no one cares.’* ”

“Unfortunately, in this case Fan Tan cannot be entirely neglected. You argued, ‘If we are weak, at any rate let us alone in our weakness.’ That is impossible. Your greatness and your weakness combine to make it so. Just as Europe in old days could not allow Spain to dominate in North as well as South America, and just as yesterday we could not allow Germany to ‘scramble’ for Africa, even so to-day, for the same reason, we cannot allow China to be absorbed by any individual nation; for, if that were to happen, that nation, armed with the resources of the Eighteen Provinces, would be a danger to the world at large. Hence it is your debility that makes the nations take post everywhere around you. Your

* A Chinese proverb. Fan Tan was a scholar, worthy, but very helpless.

decadence is a universal danger, involving the fortunes of mankind. But of this be well assured that, though malevolent and pernicious designs be hatched against you in a certain quarter, and though you may have been handled rudely enough in the past, you would find, if you could search the hearts and minds of the wisest statesmen in Christendom, and you would have found always, a profound and anxious desire that China should possess a strong, stable, and enlightened government of her own. For the alternative is, sooner or later, the partition of China, a solution which can scarcely be accomplished without the dreadful arbitrament of war between the nations of Christendom.

“Hence, in reply to the second stage of your argument that Christendom has inflicted manifold misfortunes upon the outer world, it should be answered that all these are but incidents, evil indeed, but still only incidents, in a necessary work of progress. It was necessary, I say. Europe, having been organized into nations, those nations were driven by the need of sheer self-preservation to partition the major part of the world among themselves. For that outer world was so weak and empty that it lay exposed to the first comer, who, if left to work his will undisturbed upon those continents, and to organize them at his pleasure, would inevitably have utilized the weight of their new resources to crush the freedom of the West. And also it was a work of progress. The Christian nations have not only imparted their incomparable life and energy into such desolate regions as those of America and Australia, but also where they have found elsewhere ancient, if deciduous, civilizations

and populous, if disorganized, communities, they have begun to elevate and improve them. If you will, it was not philanthropy. They have been driven to this course by the same necessity which has forced them to conquer. For on no other terms, in the long run, can their dominion stand secure.

“In the third and concluding stage of your argument you anticipated, and even hoped for, the expulsion of Christendom from the scene of its imagined crimes. But the outer peoples have neither the strength to compel us, nor the wish to see us go. As regards our strength, you think that the European stock shows symptoms of decay. What! a population of white men which was 170,000,000 in 1800, and now numbers 500,000,000! However that may be, if the cause of our embarrassment is the too heavy burden of our armaments, you may be sure that Europe is not so bent on suicide as not to seek relief in time. But if you still think us decadent, carry your eye eastward from the Peak on which we stand.

“Travel eight thousand miles across yonder Pacific and you shall find a Golden Gate. Enter it, and you will see a nation of a kind never known before. It was conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the equality of man. All the nations of Europe endow it daily with the gift of their citizens, so that within that ample boundary the conquerors are no more than the conquered, the race of the oppressors than the race of the oppressed. Here it is that our old divided Europe shall renew its youth like the eagle, and shall find its unity once more.

“Then cross the Atlantic, and in our northern island you shall find a nation greater still. It has spared the United States out of its empire, yet even

so it presides over a household of free nations, and controls the destinies of one quarter of the human race. Of these many peoples it is the servant no less than the master, and the teacher no less than the lord. Nor is this the term and boundary of its influence. For the humanity of its Throne, the wisdom of its statesmen, and the valour of its people, exist also for the benefit of mankind.

“Thus reinforced, we shall not be ousted easily by the subject peoples. Besides, these latter have no substantial reason for desiring that we should go. Have we deprived them of freedom? They never had it. Or of wealth? But it multiplies ten thousandfold beneath our hands. Or of religion? But we persecute no man.

“Nevertheless, it must be confessed reluctantly that, even so, and in spite of all these indubitable benefits, there is the melancholy truth, to which you have borne abundant witness, that, if hearts be in question, we do not ‘hold the gorgeous East in fee’ by any means, and that indeed we Europeans are still viewed with suspicion and even hatred far and wide. But there are two final observations which I shall take leave to offer upon this point, and the first is by way of a Scandinavian legend.

“One day Thor, the paragon of strength and vigour, found himself, in the course of his wanderings, a guest in the palace of Loké, the king of the giants, whose abode is in Jotunheim. During the progress of the feast, Thor was rallied as to what he could do, and Loké, to test his powers of drinking, set a drinking-horn before him, that he might drain it at a draught. Thor did his best, but, when he set it down, the cup, after all his efforts, was almost as full as before. Then

Loké laughed and said, 'You have failed at drinking; let us see if you can lift my grey cat from the floor.' Thor put forth all his efforts, but, for aught he could do, he could only lift one foot of the cat from the ground. Then Loké laughed more loudly, and said, 'You have failed at drinking and at lifting, but I have heard that you are a wrestler. Here is my nurse, old Ella. Of a surety, even you can wrestle with her.' So Thor wrestled with Ella, but the more he wrestled the firmer she stood, until the hall of the giants rang with scornful laughter as Thor fell on his knees before the ancient dame.

"So Thor crept away from that company crest-fallen and utterly abased. But, as he passed outside, Loké came to him and said, 'Thor, do not lose heart or be dismayed. The water in that drinking-horn, look you, it was the ocean. Your draught was so mighty that the ocean is diminished. Men will call it the ebb. The cat whose paw you uplifted was no cat in verity, but was the great serpent which lies coiled round the world. When you shifted its foot we all stood terrified. And that was a marvellous bout of wrestling that you wrestled with Ella. No man yet lived, or shall live, who shall overcome Ella; for she was Old Age.'

"You see the application of Thor to Christendom. Against all appearances, we shall yet do much to modify in our favour the sentiment towards us of 'the changeless East.' But we have to deal with prejudices as old and as strong as humanity.

"We shall succeed on one condition, and on one alone. The gulf between us is as deep as the division between Confucianism and Christianity. On that subject you made, perhaps unconsciously, many

admissions. You explained that Confucius confessed to an entire ignorance of anything beyond human conduct, and that, in effect, he had no religion at all; so that to-day China, to make good the void, must draw from heaven the cloudy metaphysics of Buddha, and from earth the base material superstitions of Taō. On the other hand, in the midst of your invective of Christendom, you said of Christianity that it came from Asia, the true home of religion, and that it preached peace on earth and goodwill among the nations.

“This is the religion which came to you long ago, and you rejected it. Like the Sibyl of old days who returned with ever-diminishing volumes, Christianity stands again before you, but three centuries have been torn from the book of the life which it can give. Consider well and wisely ere you again reject it. For on that decision hangs the issue of the union or division of the world.”

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